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THE
ANABAPTISTS :
BEING AN
ACCOUNT OF THE PROGRESS
OF THE
REFORMATION IN GERMANY,
FROM THE DIET OF WORMS
TO THE DEATH OF FREDERIC, ELECTOR OF SAXONY:
COMPRISING THE HISTORY OF THE
ANABAPTISTS, OR MENNONITES:
WITH
REMARKS ON FANATICISM, RIOTS, WAR, OATHS,
BAPTISM, THE SABBATH, AND
OTHER SUBJECTS.

[The Twelfth Volume of the S. S. Church History.]

BY HARVEY NEWCOMB.

Written for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, and revised
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THE ANABAPTISTS.

CONVERSATION I.

LUTHER IN THE CASTLE.

He writes Tracts and translates the New Testament—is censured by the divines of Louvain and Paris—Henry VIII. writes a book against him.

Caroline. My dear mother, I want to hear more about Luther. How did he like to live in the castle, shut up so? * I should not like to be shut up.

Elizabeth. I think all the world would be wondering what had become of him.

Samuel. And I suppose some would think he had been murdered by the Papists, and others would think he had run away; and so it would make a great talk all over the country.

Peter. And I suppose the Papists would be very glad, if they thought he was dead.

Mother. Yes, my dear children; the sudden

* See "The Dawn."

disappearance of Luther made a great noise, all over Germany. It was reported and generally believed, that he had been murdered on the way.

Caroline. I suppose that made the good people feel very sorry.

Mother. Yes, my dear; the friends of the Reformation were very much cast down, with the loss of their leader. But the Papists boasted about it, and hoped it would prove true. However, many of his friends thought that he had shut himself up at Wittemberg. But you asked me, my dear Caroline, how Luther liked to be shut up in the castle. He was not pleased with it; and I suppose he would not have been satisfied to stay, if he had not thought it was his duty. He was an active man, and he did not like to be shut up. He was bold and courageous, and he did not like to run away from danger. He was anxious to be with his friends, helping forward the cause of truth. His living, too, was too rich for him. It injured his health. He complains of sickness, and says his mind grew feeble, and his prayers lifeless.

Samuel. Well, I think he ought to have been willing to be any where, if it was God's will.

Mother. Yes, and I suppose he was. He

called the name of the place where he was shut up, his *PATMOS*, after the name of the Island where the Apostle John was banished.*

Elizabeth. What did he do there, mother?

Mother. He did not give himself up to idleness, because he could not labor among the people as he wished to do. But he spent his time in writing books and translating the Bible. He had not been there long before he wrote a tract against the abuses of private confession.† In this little book, he exposed the wicked practices of the priests.

Elizabeth. Mother, I have read what is said about *confession* in the *Great Apostasy*; but I wish you would tell me a little more about how the priests managed it.

Mother. According to the laws of the church of Rome, the people must tell the priest every thing they have done, and all their secret thoughts and feelings.

Elizabeth. I should not like to do that. I should rather confess my sins to God.

Mother. It is much better, my dear. If you confess your sins to God, he can forgive them;

* See History of First Christians, p. 164. Also, Rev. 1: 9.

† See Great Apostasy, p. 147.

but the priests have no power to forgive sins, as they pretend. But this is one of the pillars of the church of Rome. It gives a wonderful influence to the priests. The Papists are taught, from childhood, to believe that they will lose their souls if they keep back any thing from their confessors. By this means, the priests become acquainted with the secrets of all the people; and these they hold over them as a rod, to make them do what they say. Besides this, if they will not mind them, they can refuse to pardon their sins. The monks, in Luther's time, lived in the houses of rich people, and by becoming acquainted with their secrets, they acquired a great influence over them. Then they would contrive to be with them when they were dying, and make them give great sums to the monasteries, in their wills. And I suppose they do this now, wherever Popery prevails. But far worse is the effect which this practice of confession has upon the morals both of the priests and the people. When the priests are all the time listening to the details of evil thoughts and wicked actions, they become so familiar with crime, that their hearts are hardened, and their own minds polluted. It is almost impossible that it should not be so. And then, in

return, they pollute the minds of the young, who are obliged to disclose all their thoughts to them. This they do in a very artful manner, when they have young girls before them. They will ask them indecent questions about their thoughts and feelings, till their minds are polluted, and they are prepared to become a prey to the wicked passions of the priests. In those countries where Popery generally prevails, the abominable licentiousness of the priests is no secret; and the reason why their wickedness, in this way, is not generally known in this country, is, that it is kept secret, because they are afraid of public opinion.

Samuel. But it seems to me that a worse thing than all this is, that the people will trust in their confessions, and the absolution of the priest, instead of the merits of Christ.

Mother. Yes, my son, you are right; for this leads to the ruin of their souls. And this was the principal reason why Luther wrote against private confessions.

Samuel. Well, I suppose the wicked priests did not like Luther's tract.

Mother. No; although he touched lightly upon the licentiousness of the clergy, they were up in arms against him.

Peter. But what could they do, mother, when they could not find him?

Mother. They could only rage, and vent their spite against his books and his followers.

Elizabeth. And did the Reformation go on, mother, while Luther was confined?

Mother. Yes; through the influence of his preaching and of his writings, the truth had taken deep root throughout many parts of Germany; and there were many zealous men engaged in promoting the cause. More than a year before, Luther had published a tract against the abominable doctrine of the *Mass*.* The Augustine friars at Wittenberg now ventured openly to abolish the practice of celebrating *private masses*.

Peter. What is *private mass*, mother?

Mother. You will see in the *Great Apostasy*, that the Papists hold that the ceremony of celebrating mass, is a real sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ; and they had introduced the practice of saying mass for all who desired it, to enable them, as they supposed, to obtain whatever they wished. And this was done by the priests, without asking what the people wanted. So if a man had lost money, or any thing else, he

* See *Great Apostasy*, p. 142.

would go to the priest, and get him to say mass, to enable him to find it. And if a man wished to be successful in any enterprise, good or bad, he would get the priest to say mass for him. So, according to their own doctrine, they would sacrifice the Lord Jesus Christ to help people get money, or even to aid them in acts of wickedness; for a man might get the priest to say mass, for the death of an enemy, or for success in stealing, or in cheating or robbing his neighbor.

Samuel. What abominable blasphemy, mother! How could the priests make the people believe that God would help them do wickedly? And how could they be so wicked?

Mother. When people are under the influence of superstition, they may be made to believe any thing, no matter how ridiculous and absurd. And we may easily see why the priests would encourage such an abominable practice. They were always well paid for the private masses, and it brought them an immense revenue. It was one of the chains which riveted upon the people the tyranny of the church of Rome.

Peter. I think Luther would be very glad to hear that the monks had put a stop to this practice at Wittemberg.

Mother. Yes, he was; and he wrote another book, in favor of abolishing private masses. And, soon after, he wrote another book, on *Monastic vows*,* in which he maintained that, when the monks and nuns promise that they will never marry, such promises are not binding.

Elizabeth. Was he right, mother? I thought it was always wrong to break a promise. But the promise of the monks and nuns is a solemn oath or vow, made in the presence of God.

Mother. Yes, my dear Elizabeth. But we have no right to make a promise or take an oath to do any thing wrong. If we do, we sin in making the promise or taking the oath, but not in breaking it. Marriage is an ordinance of God. He made man and woman to live together; the whole system of monkery is opposed to the ordinance of God. The monastic vow becomes a snare to the consciences of the monks and nuns, leading them into sin. It is taken under false views of duty. Therefore, when their minds become enlightened, it cannot be wrong to break it.

Peter. Then, mother, if I promise to do any thing wrong, I am not bound to do it.

Mother. No, my son; you cannot bind your-

* See Great Apostasy, p. 164.

self to do what God has forbidden. But it is very wicked for you *to make a bad promise*.

Caroline. How did the Papists like this book, mother?

Mother. They clamored against it very much. But that was to be expected, for monkery has always been one of the pillars of Popery.* While Luther was in the castle of Wartburgh, the divines of the College of Louvain condemned his writings, and one of them, named James Latomus, wrote a book to defend their sentence. To this book, Luther wrote a very able and spirited reply. But the most important work in which he was engaged, during his confinement in the castle, was the translation of the Bible. He had a great reverence and love for the Scriptures. It was God's word which had opened his eyes to see the abominations of Popery; and he saw that the Bible was what was wanted to open the eyes of the people. But that blessed book had never been translated into the German language. It was for the interests of Popery, that the common people should not read the Bible; and so its blessed truths were kept locked up in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages. But Luther determined to

* See Great Apostasy, p. 95.

open this precious treasure to the common people; and, during the summer of the year 1521, while shut out from the world, he translated the whole of the New Testament into the German language. He also took great pains to improve his knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, so that he might be the better prepared to translate the whole Bible.

Peter. How long did Luther stay in the castle, mother?

Mother. About nine months.

Samuel. I think he was very industrious, mother, to write so much, and translate the New Testament, in that time.

Mother. Yes; but besides this, he wrote a great many letters to his intimate friends. These letters express the feelings of his heart. They show his strong confidence in God, his love to the cause of Christ, and his determination to hazard every thing for the truth. While in the castle, he let his beard grow long, changed his dress, and passed for a country gentleman, under the name of Yonker George. And he sometimes amused himself with hunting, in company with the people who lived in the castle. That you may know something about his feelings, while there,

I will read you a few lines that he wrote to his friend Melancthon: "I sit here in my Patmos," says he, "thinking all the day of the wretched condition of the church. And I mourn over the hardness of my heart, that I am not dissolved in tears on this account. May God have mercy upon us. For the glory of the word of God, and for the mutual confirmation of myself and others, I would much rather burn on the 'live coals, than live here alone, half alive and useless. If I perish, it is God's will; neither will the Gospel suffer in any degree."

Elizabeth. O that was a noble spirit. How I admire the man!

Mother. Rather, my Elizabeth, admire the grace of God, which raised up just such a man as was needed at that critical time.

Samuel. Mother, I should like to hear more of what Luther's followers were doing, all this time.

Mother. The friends of the Reformation at Wittemberg, were very much discouraged during this summer. Their great leader was absent; and the Elector Frederic and his court were so cautious that they could do very little to advance the cause of truth. He would not allow them the

full privilege of publishing Luther's writings, nor of disputing publicly upon questions which were likely to offend the Papists. Luther was very careful to obey his rulers, when they did not require him to do wrong. But when he was satisfied that they required him to do any thing directly contrary to the will of God, he made no scruple of disobeying them.

Samuel. Well, I think that was right; for the Apostles would not obey their rulers when they forbade them to preach Christ. They said it was better to obey God than man.

Mother. Yes; there is no doubt on this subject. In things which are not absolutely wrong, we are in duty bound to obey the laws of our country; and when we refuse, we disobey God. But when those laws require us to do what God has forbidden, or neglect what he has required, it is plain that we ought to disobey them. For instance, the laws of the United States require that the post office should be open every day in the week. But, when the postmasters open their offices on the Sabbath day, they break God's commandment, though they obey the commandments of men. They do wrong. No human law will justify us in breaking the law of God. So

when Luther saw that the policy of the Elector's court was doing injury to the cause of truth, he wrote to his Christian friends at the University not to follow the advice of the court, but to take the lead themselves. At the same time, when he saw any disposition on the part of the people to rise up and maintain their rights by force, in opposition to the laws, they met with his stern reproof. The students at Erfurt, with the common people, joined in a riot against the clergy, on account of the abuses practised by them. But Luther wrote to them, saying, "It is very proper that the clergy, who prove themselves to be incurably profligate, should be checked and discouraged; but by no means in THIS WAY. This manner of doing it is a just disgrace upon our Gospel, and hinders its success. This way of showing kindness to us afflicts me exceedingly; for it shows that we are not yet worthy of being esteemed before God as faithful ministers of his word; and that Satan makes a mock of all our labors."

Elizabeth. I like that, mother. It strikes at the root of *mob law*.

Mother. Yes, my dear; and there is scarcely any principle more important to be embraced by

young people, than that of *respect for the laws of the country*. Within a year past, the people, in many places, have taken the law into their own hands. When they have supposed individuals have deserved to be punished, they have gathered together in mobs, and taken vengeance upon them, without the form of a trial. If this principle continues to be acted upon, it will leave us only the name of liberty. Our good constitutions and laws will be worth nothing. We shall be at the mercy of a lawless mob, and have no security for our lives or property. I wish you, therefore, firmly to adopt this principle : NEVER TO DO ANY THING CONTRARY TO THE LAWS OF THE COUNTRY, UNLESS THEY REQUIRE YOU TO VIOLATE THE LAW OF GOD.

Samuel. But, mother, there are some evils that the law cannot reach. Is it not better for people to rise up and remove them by force, than to suffer great injury to be done to society ? I have thought a great many times that it would be a good thing, if the people in this city would meet and tear down all the grog-shops ; for they are doing more than any thing else to destroy the comfort and ruin the morals of the people.

Mother. No, my son ; the grog-shops are a

great evil; and it would be a very great benefit to society if they were removed. But *there is no evil so great as the prostration of the laws.* When the people of this country have lost their respect for the laws, our government will be at an end; and a despotism will rise upon its ruins. It is better, then, to bear with any evil in society, than to undertake to redress it by force, contrary to law.

Elizabeth. Mother, I think Luther's people were very sorry that he was taken away from them, so that they could not enjoy his preaching.

Mother. I have no doubt they were; but he wrote them a long letter, full of pious sentiments, and affectionate feeling. He told them that he was sorry he was not yet found worthy to suffer any thing for Christ's sake, but hatred and reproach; though, if the Lord had not been on his side, he says he should long ago have been torn in pieces. He praised God for his goodness in supporting him, and confounding the enemies of the truth.—I have often told you that, though the Papists had such a multitude of priests, the preaching of the Gospel was almost wholly neglected. Luther felt very much the importance of regular preaching. He had seen the advantages of it

among his own people ; and now in his absence they were thirsting for the word of God. To supply their wants, he wrote a number of familiar explanations of the Gospels and Epistles, and sent them to Wittemberg, to be printed for their use. He also requested Melancthon to preach to them, while he was absent. Preaching and publishing the truth, and exhorting the people to the diligent study of God's holy word, were the means upon which Luther depended for delivering the people from the darkness of Popery ; and he had the consolation of seeing his labors more and more blessed. The Augustine monks, at Wittemberg, left off the celebration of private masses, and new preachers of the Gospel rose up, in different parts of the country. Though some persons of the higher ranks were frightened at the edict of Worms ; yet the common people gladly listened to the pure doctrines of the Gospel.

Samuel. Mother, I think the common people are always more willing to receive the truth than the rulers and great men. When Christ was in the world, the common people heard him gladly ; but the priests and rulers would not believe in him.

Mother. Yes, my son ; the rulers are gener-

ally afraid of losing their authority, if any new thing is introduced; and priests, who get their living by supporting a false religion, will always be opposed to a reformation. And the great and the fashionable, the rich and the worldly, do not like the humbling doctrines of the Gospel, which place all men on a level, as lost sinners, in the sight of God. But the Gospel is just suited to the wants of the poor; and though their hearts are by nature opposed to it, they are much more likely to receive it than the rich and the great.

In the course of this year, Nicholas Hausman began to preach the Gospel at Zwickau. This town was greatly blessed of the Lord. From the very first, the sentiments of Luther were received and taught there, in private. And there, too, Frederic Myconius, Luther's intimate friend, preached to the people. He was a distinguished reformer. When he was sixteen years old, he entered the monastery at Annaberg.

Peter. Why, mother, he was very young to be a monk.

Mother. Yes; but he was very zealous in religion. For honest people, Popery is a hard master. It lays heavy burdens upon men's consciences, grievous to be borne. The monks and

nuns, and the priests, are obliged to go through so many ceremonies, and to endure so many hardships, that it very soon wears them out, if they are honest in doing what their rules require. Myconius suffered so much from the practice of Popish austerities, and from hard study, while in the monastery, that he became very weak in body. When Tetzel came along with his indulgences, he asked him to give him one for nothing, as he was poor, and unable to pay for it. But Tetzel would not do it; and he was led to examine the subject of selling indulgences. He was confirmed in the truth by Luther's writings, and became a zealous opposer of the corruptions of Popery. At Freyburg, also, the people began to embrace the truth. John, can you find Freyburg on the map?

John. Yes, here it is, in Thuringia. Who governed this place, mother?

Mother. It was governed by Henry, duke of Saxony, and brother of duke George.

Elizabeth. Then I suppose the reformers got no peace there; for his brother was such a bitter persecutor.

Mother. My dear, we must not judge people by their relations. A very good man may have

a very wicked brother. Before the diet of Worms, Henry began to show some regard for the truth. He was displeased with the Pope's bull, and wrote to Luther for instruction in the truth. But through fear of the edict of Worms, and of his brother George, he was prevented from doing any thing more for the good cause. However, his wife Catharine was a faithful Christian. She was in great danger of being persecuted; but she put her trust in God. She said, in one of her letters, that she was ready to suffer any thing that might happen to her for obeying the Scriptures. So, you see, the good seed of the word of God was springing up in almost every corner of Germany.

Samuel. I suppose Luther rejoiced in his confinement, when he heard that the good cause was going on.

Mother. Yes; but several things took place, while he was there, which were not very agreeable to his feelings. He learned that things were not well managed at Wittemberg. Many of the canons of that place disgraced the cause of the Reformation, by the practice of Popish superstitions, and by their vicious, profligate conduct.

Caroline. What is a canon, mother?

Mother. A *canon*, generally, means a law or rule of the church. But, it is also a title given to a person appointed to perform divine service in a cathedral, or in a college church.—But, besides this, Carolstadt began to make disturbance among the Reformers themselves.

Elizabeth. Was that the same man that disputed with Eckius at Leipsic ?*

Mother. Yes, my dear, he was the same. He was a troublesome man, as we shall see before long. When these things came to Luther's ears, he left the castle, privately, and went to Wittemberg to see if he could not set matters right.

Peter. I should think he would have been afraid to do that, mother, when the Catholics wanted so much to kill him.

Mother. My son, he did not stay in the castle because he was afraid of losing his life; but he was kept there by the Elector Frederic. He would no doubt have cheerfully given up his life, for the sake of the truth.

Samuel. How did Luther find his affairs at Wittemberg, mother ?

Mother. In general, he says what he saw gave him the highest satisfaction. But he was quite vexed with the restless spirit of Carolstadt, and

* See " *The Dawn*," p. —.

some other friends of the Reformation ; and when he returned to the castle, he wrote and published an exhortation to them, suited to the circumstances. But, besides these troubles, the university of Paris passed a solemn censure upon Luther's writings, and condemned his doctrine as "erroneous both in faith and manners, and proper only to deceive simple people." This was the oldest and most respectable university in Europe. In 1517, they had ventured to deny the infallibility of the Pope ; and Luther had before appealed to them.

Samuel. I suppose, then, he was disappointed and mortified that they should decide against him.

Mother. Yes, I suppose he was. But Melancthon wrote a book, defending Luther against their decision. Luther, in one of his letters, says, "I have seen the decree of the Parisian sophists, and the apology of my friend, Philip Melancthon. From my heart I rejoice. Christ would never have so completely blinded their eyes, if he had not determined to take care of his own cause, and put an end to the despotism of his enemies." But Luther's patience was also tried, during his confinement, by an attack made upon him by

Henry VIII. king of England. Henry was a worldly, ambitious, and wicked prince; and he had been for some time trying to get the Pope to give him some honorable title. I suppose his chief object in writing this book was to gain the favor of the Pope; though he was a man of learning, and probably hoped to gain some fame by writing a book. It was presented to the Pontiff with great formality; and in return for it he received the title of DEFENDER OF THE FAITH.

Elizabeth. Why, mother, that is what the king of England is called now. I should not think a Protestant king would hold a title that was given by the Pope.

Mother. Worldly and ambitious men are not very scrupulous about such things. If they get honor, they are not very anxious where it comes from.

Caroline. Did Luther answer the king, mother?

Mother. Yes, my dear; but he did it in such a way as to do himself no honor. He treated him very roughly; and answered his book in a severe and angry manner. This was Luther's great fault. He was very irritable; and, in his controversies, he was greatly wanting in meekness. In his writings of this kind, he did not

show a gentle, Christian spirit. The Bible says, "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger."

Samuel. But, mother, is it not right to oppose those who teach false doctrines?

Mother. Yes, my son; but it should be done in a spirit of kindness and Christian meekness. Resentment is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel; and when men use angry words, and abuse one another, while disputing about religion, they do great injury to the cause of Christ.

In the month of December of this year, Pope Leo X. died. He was a man of abandoned and vicious character, though he pretended to be the representative of Christ upon earth. He sent out his bulls against heretics, while he was profaning the highest seat in the church, with his profligacy and impiety. But we have talked long enough this evening.

QUESTIONS.

What effect had the sudden disappearance of Luther? What did he do, in his confinement? Can you give an explanation of the private mass? What was the most important work in which Luther was engaged, while confined in the castle of Wartburg? What is said of the friends of the Reformation at Wittemberg? What happened at Erfurt? What did Luther write to the students about it? What happened at Zwickau? What is said of Frederic Myconius? What did the University of Paris do? What did Henry VIII., king of England, do? How did Luther answer him?

CONVERSATION II.

Carolstadt—regulations about abolishing private masses—the Anabaptists—Luther returns to Wittemberg.

Peter. Mother, you told us that we should see, before long, that Carolstadt was a troublesome man. I thought he showed a good deal of courage in coming out in favor of the Reformation, before any body else dared to favor Luther's opinions.

Mother. Yes, my son ; I admire his courage ; but he was a man of violent passions, of a turbulent disposition, and determined to have his own way. I have seen people of such dispositions ; and I find it very uncomfortable to have any thing to do with them. They seem to care more about gratifying their own wills, than they do about glorifying God and doing HIS will. If any thing is done without consulting them, and putting them forward, they are always finding fault. They will run headlong in their own way ; always getting into difficulty ; but if they cannot do a thing

just in the way they think best, they will do nothing at all. I wish to impress deeply upon your minds, that such a disposition is entirely contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, and disgraceful to the Christian name. But such you will find to be the disposition of Carolstadt; and that is the reason that he made disturbance among the Reformers.

Caroline. What did he do, mother?

Mother. While Luther was confined in his "*Patmos*," and the cause of the rising Reformation was in a most critical condition, Carolstadt was impatient with its slow progress. Mistaking the mild and peaceful spirit of the Gospel, he undertook to carry things by force. He collected together a company of hot-headed young men, and after inflaming their minds by a violent speech, he led them into the great church, called All Saints, broke the images and crosses in pieces, and threw down the altars.

Peter. Well, mother, as it is wicked to worship images, what harm was there in that?

Mother. My son, if he had been the pastor of the church, there would have been no harm in his ordering the images to be removed, in a quiet way. But this was a church in which he had no

authority; and the images and crosses and altars were placed there by law. His proceedings, therefore, were a riotous violation of law and order, like the mobs in this country; and very unbecoming a minister of the Gospel of peace.

Samuel. Mother, I would like to know what it was that led him to these proceedings.

Mother. Caroline, my dear, you may read the 25th verse of the 11th chapter of Matthew.

Caroline. At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

Mother. Well, Carolstadt thought this passage meant that learning was not only useless, but injurious to any one who wished to understand the Bible.

Peter. Well, mother, if God will hide these things from the wise, would it not be better for them to have no learning?

Mother. Jesus was speaking about the Scribes and Pharisees, and the priests and rulers of the Jews, who *thought* themselves very wise. When people think too much of themselves, God will humble them. And I suppose he did not hide

these things from them because they were learned and wise; but because they were so proud of their knowledge, and supposed themselves to be so wise. Therefore, God revealed the knowledge of the Gospel to the poor and ignorant rather than to them. And so he will always do. A learned and self-righteous man, who is proud of his knowledge, and unwilling to be taught, will be much less likely to embrace the Gospel, than a poor ignorant man, who feels sensible of his ignorance. But that does not show that learning is in itself bad, or necessarily injurious to those who possess it. But Carolstadt was so much carried away with this notion, that he went round to the poorest and most ignorant people, to consult them about the meaning of the Scriptures. He lived in a village, and employed himself as a laborer, maintaining that thinking persons had no need of learning, and that they had better be at work than at study.

Samuel. Paul did not think so, mother. He told Timothy to "give attendance to reading;" to "meditate upon these things, and give himself wholly unto them."

Mother. Yes; and Paul was a learned man himself. But he never wishes that he had no

learning ; and I suppose if Christ had thought learning a bad thing, he would not have called Paul to be a missionary to the heathen. It is only when we abuse learning, and feel proud of it, that it becomes a bad thing for us. But as Carolstadt was one of the first leaders of the Reformation, and a man of some importance at Wittemberg, his example led many of the young men to quit their studies and leave the university ; and even the boys in the schools were affected by it.

Samuel. I think such things would injure the Reformation, mother.

Mother. They were calculated to do much injury. They produced the first beginning of division in the ranks of the Reformers. I have already told you that the monks at Wittemberg had begun to abolish the private masses, and that Luther was pleased with it. But the Elector Frederic was alarmed at it, and sent a man to tell them that he did not like to have any alterations made in the established customs of the church. The Reformers appointed Justus Jonas, Philip Melancthon, Nicholas Amsdorf, John Doltz, Jerome Schurf, and Andrew Carolstadt, to examine the matter. They made a written re-

port, approving what had been done, and exhorting the Elector to put an end to the Popish profanation of the Lord's Supper, throughout his dominions. They told him, that, as a Christian prince, it became him to act with dignity and spirit in such an affair, and not mind being called Heretic or Hussite. Whoever faithfully supported the cause of the Gospel, must expect reproach and abuse. And, as God had been pleased to enlighten his mind with a knowledge of the truth, more than any of the rest of the princes, they told him that he would be called to account, in the day of Judgment, for the talents given him.

Peter. I think they were very bold, to talk so to their prince. What did he say to them?

Mother. He sent Professor Beyer to give them his answer; in which he told them that he wished, in every thing, to conduct himself like a Christian prince. He did not wish to leave any thing undone, which might promote the glory of God, and help the cause of truth. But he thought the alteration proposed, was of too much importance to be decided by a few. It required the mature deliberation of the whole church. If their advice was sound, he said it would be followed by others, and then he might begin to make the

change with some prospect of success. But, as many churches and monasteries had been founded only for the purpose of saying masses, it would be a question whether their revenues should not be stopped, when the masses were abolished. But, finally, as they did not seem to be inclined to take his advice, he owned that he was only a layman, and not skilled in the Scriptures; and therefore he entreated them calmly to consult their brethren, the rulers of the church and the University, and so to settle the business that no tumults or seditions might follow.

Samuel. I can't help admiring the tenderness of conscience and humility of this prince. I think he was very anxious to know and do what was right; and I like him because he was not inclined to interfere with things that did not belong to him.

Mother. Yes, my son; although this prince, on many occasions, appears too timid and cautious; yet, it is very probable that his extraordinary prudence did as much for the cause of the Reformation as the boldness and courage of Luther; for it prevented it from being nipped in the bud, before it had strength or root to endure.

And I suppose it was for this very purpose that God raised him up.

Elizabeth. What did the Wittemberg Reformers say to his answer, mother?

Mother. They told him that they were still of the opinion that the private masses ought to be abolished. 'This, they thought, might be done without tumult or danger. But, if it could not, they said the evil was so great that it ought to be removed, without regard to consequences. Although the Reformers were but a small part of the church, yet they had the word of God on their side; and to this, all ought to bow. From the beginning of the world, they said only a very small part of mankind had acknowledged the truth.

Samuel. Is not that true, mother? Is it not generally the case, that the majority are on the wrong side?

Mother. In regard to moral principles, and practical questions of duty, it has generally been the case, that the majority of mankind are on the wrong side; and I suppose it will be so till the millennium, when the principles of the Bible will be generally embraced, throughout the world.—

The Reformers went on with a long argument against the mass; and then told the prince that if any tumults should arise in consequence of abolishing the mass, they were not to be charged upon them, but upon those persons who, for the sake of keeping up their dignity, their income, and their luxurious tables, continued to hide the light of the truth, and cruelly to wage war against the altars of God. But, if their rulers would only allow the word of God to be freely preached, heard, and read; even though they opposed it with all the arguments in their power; yet, if they did not inflict cruel punishments upon their adversaries, there would be no tumults. However, the Christian rule was, neither to regard the madness of the enemy, nor the greatness of the danger. Christ and his apostles did not remain silent, though they knew the preaching of the Gospel would be attended with discords, seditions, and revolutions. And they concluded with seriously reminding the Elector of the words of Christ: "Whosoever loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me."

Elizabeth. What effect did this have upon the Elector?

Mother. I have no doubt his serious mind was much affected by it; for he let them go on with their proceedings, though he did not sanction them. But it was just at this critical time, when great prudence and caution were necessary, that the violent spirit of Carolstadt broke out in the way that I was telling you. He had done all he could to bring learning into disgrace at Wittemberg, where Luther and Melancthon had labored so hard to advance it. He now ventured to administer the sacrament publicly, in both kinds, to all who chose to partake of it, without any regard to their fitness. The senate and university of Wittemberg complained of these things to the Elector; and he sent Commissioners to settle the matter, and with the consent of all parties, to make such regulations as the circumstances seemed to require. But they went much farther than he intended; and he told them they must not make him responsible for what they had done.

Peter. What did they do, mother?

Mother. They ordered, 1. That all persons, who gave evidence of repentance, should be admitted to the sacrament; 2. The Popish notion

that the mass is a sacrifice was rejected ; and, 3. The images were to be removed out of the great church.

Samuel. These were no very small steps in the Reformation, mother. As undecided and doubtful as Frederic was, I do not wonder that he was alarmed.

Mother. It is not to be wondered at, especially as he was a prince of little power, who had to contend with the Pope, the emperor, and the neighboring princes.

Elizabeth. Well, I suppose Carolstadt was satisfied with these regulations.

Mother. No, my dear, he was far from being satisfied.

Samuel. But I don't see how he could complain of them.

Mother. There is too much reason to believe that his ruling motives were pride and self-will ; and I hope you will hold up the conduct of this man as a warning against indulging the same disposition yourself. He even told Melancthon that he wished to be as great and as much thought of as Luther. Melancthon told him that was the language of pride, envy, and unchristian ambition. But Carolstadt said he did not care for any body.

Peter. Mother, they say “DON’T CARE, *was Harry’s undoing.*”

Mother. Although that is a homely proverb, my son, yet, nothing was ever nearer the truth; and you will find that this spirit was the ruin of this unhappy man. He said he would stick close to the Scriptures, and no man could be a Christian, who found fault with what he did.

Elizabeth. Well, did he not do right in sticking close to the Scriptures?

Mother. That was a safe rule, my dear, so far as he understood them. But for him to say that no one could be a Christian, who found fault with what he did, was to make himself infallible, like the Pope. When any one begins to think that he is so guided by the Bible or the Spirit of God that he cannot do wrong, he is sure to run into extravagant notions, and bring disgrace upon true religion. It would not be profitable to us, to spend our time in following out the history of Carolstadt. It is sufficient to say that his bad temper and his violent measures brought him into difficulty, wherever he went. He raised tumults among the people, and became so troublesome, at last, that the Elector banished him from his dominions. He wandered from one place to

another, till, in the time of the war of the peasants, his character for raising tumults made him suspected of being concerned with them; and he was reduced to great extremities. But through the entreaties of Luther, with whom he had quarrelled, he was allowed to return, and live in a little village near Wittemberg. He made a public recantation of his sentiments, and lived in private. In the history of this man, you see the consequences of a bad temper. If you wish to do any good in the world, or to make yourselves agreeable to others, subdue the first risings of stubbornness, self-will, impatience, and anger. Watch against a headstrong, overbearing spirit. Cultivate a patient, meek, quiet, kind, forbearing, orderly disposition. On this, greatly, depends your usefulness and comfort. Especially, my dear Samuel, if you intend to be a missionary to the heathen, you will need all these qualities; and nothing will make you so unfit for a missionary as a BAD TEMPER.

Samuel. Did Luther know what was going on at Wittemberg, mother?

Mother. He soon heard of it, and wrote to the Elector of Saxony about it. "There is no reason," said he, "to be frightened. Rather give

praise to God, and rejoice in the certainty that all will end well. Things of this kind always happen to those who undertake to spread the Gospel. We must not only expect Annas and Caiaphas to rage against us; but even a Judas to appear among the apostles, and Satan himself among the sons of God. Be wise, and look deeper than to the outward appearances. Don't be afraid; but be prepared for more events of this sort. Satan means to carry things much farther yet. Let the world clamor against us. Be not so much concerned at the falling away of particular Christians. Even Peter fell. As Paul says, we must now 'approve ourselves, as the ministers of God, in much patience, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors.' "

Elizabeth. O, mother, I can see the spirit of Luther there.

Mother. Yes; his bold and persevering spirit, and his strong faith, are manifest in this letter. He concluded with an earnest request for leave to print and circulate his own writings; and told the Elector that he would soon be at Wittenberg.

John. How did Frederic feel when he read this letter, mother?

Mother. He was deeply affected ; and immediately sent a trusty person to tell him all that had happened at Wittemberg : how the students dwindled in number, how anxious the prince was, and how much in doubt about what he ought to do. He said that nothing was so distressing to his mind, as the prospect of seditious tumults ; and that the Emperor had tied up his hands, so that he could not do what he would for the cause of truth. The bishops had also promised that they would preach the Gospel themselves, and appoint missionaries to do the same ; and it was impossible for him to oppose them. He wished very much to have Luther's advice, at such a critical time, but told him not to think of coming to Wittemberg ; for the Pope and Emperor would insist on his being delivered up to them, and the Elector could not prevent it. That would be the severest stroke that could happen to the prince. He had never undertaken to do any more for Luther, he said, than to give him a fair hearing ; and that was all that was in his power to do. But one thing he was determined : If he could but find what was the will of God, he would do it, let it cost what it might. He remembered that Christ had said, " My yoke is easy and my bur-

den is light;" and he would willingly bear, through the divine strength and help, the cross that God should lay upon him. New sects, he said, arose at Wittemberg, every day; and it was hard to tell what might happen. The Diet was soon to meet at Nuremberg, when it was expected that much would be said and done about Luther's case. The prince thought he had better remain in secret for the present. There were revolutions at hand; and if it should turn out that the Gospel should be hindered, it would be a great grief to him. Finally, the Elector gave Luther the most kind, faithful, and affectionate assurances of his friendship.

Elizabeth. Mother, I like Frederic better and better, the more I hear of him. He seems to have such a tender conscience, and to be so much afraid of doing wrong.

Mother. Yes; I admire his character very much; though I think he did not trust in God enough, and was influenced too much by the fear of man. However, he was placed in difficult circumstances, just at the dawn of the Reformation, when the cause was weak, and opinions were unsettled, and he found it no very easy matter to determine what he ought to do. But,

now, a new sect arose, which threatened still more serious injury to the infant cause of the Reformation, than any thing that had happened before.

Caroline. What were they called, mother?

Mother. They were called *Anabaptists*; which signifies that those who have been baptized in infancy, ought to be baptized over again.

Peter. Were they Baptists, then?

Mother. They held the same views of baptism as the Baptists of the present day; but they were not like them in any thing else. This sect sprung up, about the same time, in various parts of Europe. Their principal leaders, in Saxony, were Nicholas Stork, Mark Stubner, Martin Celary, and Thomas Munzer. Stork was a baker, of Zwickau. He chose twelve persons from among his acquaintances, of the same trade, calling them apostles; and also, seventy disciples, in imitation of Christ. The other three, in a disorderly and tumultuous manner, spoke to the people in the church. Nicholas Hausman, the pious pastor of the church, opposed them; but they would have their own way. They said they had a divine commission, and that they were inspired, and saw visions. Melancthon wrote to the Elector

about them. He says, "three of them have come to Wittemberg. Two of them are ignorant mechanics. The other is a man of learning. I have given them a hearing. They say they are positively sent of God to teach; that they talk with him face to face; that they can foretell future events; and that they are on a footing with prophets and apostles. I cannot tell how I am moved by these lofty pretensions. I see strong reasons for not despising these men; for it is clear to me there is something more in them than a mere human spirit; but whether the spirit be of God or not, none but Martin can easily judge. Therefore, for the peace of the church, I think Martin should, by all means, have an opportunity of examining them; especially as they appeal to him."

Elizabeth. It is very strange, mother, that Melancthon did not see through their pretensions. What did the Elector say to his letter?

Mother. You have often seen that Frederic did not think himself capable of deciding, in such cases. He was very careful, however, never to act hastily; for he was afraid of doing wrong. And in that respect, his conduct is well worthy of imitation. He called in some of his most

learned friends, and asked their advice. But they could come to no decision. They felt the same doubts which Melancthon had expressed. They were afraid of sinning against God, by condemning his best servants. But now Frederic astonished them all. "This is a most weighty and difficult case," said he, "which I, as a layman, do not comprehend. If I could clearly see my duty, most certainly I would not knowingly resist the will of Almighty God: no; rather than do that, though God hath given me and my brother a considerable share of power and wealth, I would take my staff and quit every thing I possess."

Samuel. Was not that a pious feeling, mother?

Mother. Yes, my son; that is the state of feeling we ought always to maintain; and I think the evidences of pious feeling, in the heart of Frederic, grow stronger, as he grows older.

Elizabeth. Still, mother, I think it strange that he should be so much in doubt about the character of these pretended prophets.

Mother. We must consider, my dear, the circumstances of the times. Most men were ignorant of the true principles of the Gospel; and the church of Rome holds the opinion that mira-

cles, and the spirit of inspiration and prophecy, still continue in the church. It is not then to be wondered at, that a man of Frederic's cautious spirit, should have been in doubt about these men.

Elizabeth. But, I am at a loss to think how the doctrines Luther preached, could be the means of starting up such a wild sect as that; for the great thing for which he contended, was that every thing should be decided by the word of God.

Mother. Here you may learn a very important principle, which I hope you will remember : *The propagation of correct principles, and the progress of a good cause, may, through the weakness of human nature, and the wicked passions of men, become the occasion of much evil.* Before the Reformation, the minds of men were torpid and inactive, under the load of spiritual tyranny with which they were oppressed. But when the true principles of *Reform* began to take root, they were roused to action. They shook off the superstitious fear which had prevented them from thinking upon religious subjects; yet they were too ignorant fully to understand the doctrines of the Gospel. In the midst of these agitations, it is not surprising that some men should run out

into wild and extravagant notions. There is in the human mind a strong tendency to extremes. And when it shakes off the bondage of superstition in which it has long been held, and yet is not restrained by the principles of true religion, it is like a ship on the ocean tossed by the waves, without any thing to guide it.

Elizabeth. Then, mother, I should think reformations would be dangerous.

Mother. But, my dear, the mischiefs of this kind, which attend Reformations and revolutions, are not to be compared with the evils of error and superstition, tyranny and oppression. When efforts are made to reform society, and overcome great moral evils, as soon as there is any excitement, and the angry passions of men are stirred up to opposition, many are ready to cry out against those who are making these efforts, as disturbers of the peace; and to condemn the cause in which they are engaged, as chargeable with all the excesses committed by wild enthusiasts in supporting it, or wicked men in opposing it. Even *Revivals of Religion* are by some condemned, as false and spurious, because there have been some excesses connected with them, or because the passions of wicked men may have

been roused by them to more open and hardened opposition to the truth. But, on the same principle, they might condemn the conduct of Luther and the other Reformers, and charge them with all the turbulence of Carolstadt, with the wild fanaticism of the Anabaptists, and even with the persecution of the Papists.

Samuel. Yes, mother; and on the same principle, we must charge the Lord Jesus Christ with the anger and blasphemy of the Jews, stirred up by his preaching; *or even with his own murder.*

Mother. Yes; and Paul might be charged with the great tumult at Ephesus. Indeed, there is no end to the absurdities involved in carrying out this principle.

Elizabeth. But when we are talking about the persecutions of the Papists, you charge it all upon the church of Rome. How can that be right, if we are not to make men responsible for the consequences of their principles and actions?

Mother. Here, my dear, you discover a want of discrimination. When we can show that any system is *wrong in itself*, and that the natural and necessary effect of its principles is to produce mischief in society, then we may safely charge the consequences which follow, upon the system

itself. This is the case with the principles of the church of Rome. Their necessary tendency is to enslave the mind, and produce tyranny and persecution. But it is not so with the doctrines of the Reformation. Their tendency was good; it was their *abuse*, only, that produced mischief. And so it is with Revivals of Religion. Their tendency is to bring about a thorough reformation in the characters of men; and because Satan sometimes takes the advantage of the excitement in which they are produced, to lead men into excesses and extravagances, we are not to conclude that they are wrong in themselves; nor are we to condemn particular Revivals as spurious and false, because these things attend them. This would lead us, on the same principle, to condemn the Reformation, because the Anabaptists sprung up in the midst of it; and even to condemn the excitement on the day of Pentecost, because some men mocked.

Peter. Well, mother, what was done with these prophets, at last?

Mother. Melancthon told the Elector, again, that no person could manage this business so well as Luther; and urged him to call in the aid of his judgment. But Frederic pursued his usual

cautious course. He told Melancthon to avoid disputes with these men; but to use every means in his power to prevent such tumults as had happened at Zwickau. He said he was himself no interpreter of the Holy Scriptures; and he did not know whom he ought to appoint to examine this matter; but it was impossible to bring Luther to Wittemberg without great danger to his person. But in regard to the Anabaptists, if he could but see clearly what justice required, he was ready to do his duty, at every hazard. While things remained in this state of doubt and uncertainty, Melancthon employed persons to get all the information they could about the new sect; but at the same time, he entertained Stubner, who was a man of learning, and treated him with kindness.

Caroline. Did Luther hear about the prophets, mother?

Mother. Yes; and he wrote to Melancthon, and told him that he was too timid in regard to the prophets. He ought to try the spirits, according to John's advice. "I hear of nothing said or done by them," said he, "more than Satan could do. I wish you would examine and see whether they can give any proof of a divine

commission. God never sent any prophet, who was not either called by proper persons, or authorized by special miracles. For them to say that they have the spirit of God is not enough. Then I wish you to sift their private spirit. See whether they have had any inward distresses of soul, sorrow for sin, and the comforts of the new birth. If you hear nothing from them but smooth, tranquil, religious contemplations, be sure there is wanting the Cross, the only touch-stone of Christians. Would you know the place, the time, the manner, of divine conferences and communications? Hear the written word: "As a lion will he break all my bones."* The majesty of the Divine Being speaks not *immediately*, in a way that men should see Him. None can see Him and live.

Samuel. Mother, it seems to me, if I had been Luther, I would have come to Wittemberg, at the risk of my life; for the cause of the Reformation was suffering so much for want of him.

Mother. Well, my son, Luther thought so; and he determined, at once, to leave his castle, and go where he was so much needed. While on the road to Wittemberg, he wrote to the

* Isa. 38: 13.

Elector, and told him that what he had heard from Wittemberg brought him almost to a state of despair. He had not yet suffered any thing worth speaking of. He could not lament enough the tumultuous proceedings which had taken place. The Gospel was in great danger of being disgraced from this cause. With regard to himself, he said all his hope and confidence rested entirely upon the justice of his cause. The Gospel which he preached was not a device of his own. It was a heavenly gift, from Jesus Christ our Lord. He was therefore a servant of Christ, and a teacher of the Gospel; and he intended, in future, to go by no other name. In returning to Wittemberg, he considered himself to be under a far more powerful protection than the Elector of Saxony could afford him. He did not wish to be protected by the prince. He thought, rather, that Frederic would receive support and protection from the progress of Luther, and the good cause in which he was engaged. "It is a cause," said he, "which does not call for the help of the sword. God himself will take care of it. If I knew your highness intended to defend me by the sword, I positively declare I would not return to Wittemberg. This is a case where God alone

should direct. Men should stand still and wait the event without anxiety. And that man will be found to defend himself and others most bravely, who has the firmest confidence in God. Your highness has but a very feeble reliance on God; and for that reason I cannot think of resting my defence and hopes of deliverance on you. Still, you wish to know what your duty is in this business; and you fear that you have not been sufficiently active. My answer is, that you have already done TOO MUCH, and that, at present, you ought to do nothing. GOD DOES NOT ALLOW THAT EITHER YOUR HIGHNESS OR MYSELF SHOULD DEFEND THE CAUSE OF TRUTH BY FORCE."

Samuel. I am glad to hear that, mother; for I have often heard the Reformers accused of persecuting those who differed from them, as bad as the Papists did.

Mother. I know they are often accused of it; and it is true, that in some instances, they were guilty of persecution. But, in relation to these few cases, several things are to be considered: 1. They are exceptions to the general conduct of the Protestants. No one can say that they have generally manifested a persecuting spirit. 2. It was a long time after the commencement of the

Reformation before the subject of religious liberty began to be understood; and longer still before the Protestants began to see the evils of the *Union of Church and State*; or the establishing of religion by law. The fact is, where religion is established by law, it is impossible that there should not be persecution. Where there is an established religion, the confession of faith, and the form of government, and ceremonies of worship, must be established by law; and then it follows, of course, that those who presume to think and act for themselves, must be punished; or, at least, they must be deprived of some privileges, and contribute to the support of principles which they cannot adopt. **RELIGIOUS LIBERTY CANNOT BE ENJOYED WHERE ANY RELIGION IS ESTABLISHED BY LAW.** 3. Although the Protestants have, in some instances, been guilty of persecution, it cannot be shown that the general principles of the Reformation justify persecution. It was the remains of Popery, which led the Reformers sometimes to persecute those who differed from them. But they do not lay claim to infallibility; and most Protestant denominations, now, disapprove the use of force in religious matters. But Popery, you know, is and must be,

always the same; because the Church of Rome claims to be infallible, and incapable of doing wrong; and as they have always been a persecuting church, wherever they have had the power, it must follow that persecution, or making men Papists by force, is one of the unalterable principles of that church. But, although Luther was a man of violent feelings, and bitter towards those who differed from him; yet, he always spoke and wrote against the use of force to advance the cause of religion.

Elizabeth. I want to hear the rest of Luther's letter to Frederic, mother.

Mother. Luther said that, if he should be taken, or even put to death, the Elector could not be blamed, because Luther had not followed his advice. "Do not think," said he, "of opposing the Emperor by force. Let him do what he pleases with the lives and property of your subjects." And many other things this bold reformer said, in the same tone, to his prince.

Peter. How did he dare talk so to his prince? Was not Frederic angry with him?

Mother. Frederic was astonished at Luther's boldness; but he was too good a man to be angry with the Reformer's plainness. He sent Jerome

Schurf, to assure him of his kindness and good will; and to ask him to write another letter, in a little different style from the last, which he might show to his friends, and to the other German princes. He wished him to give his reasons, at length, for returning to Wittemberg, and to say that he had taken this step without the orders of the prince. This Luther did; but at the same time told Frederic that there was nothing in his other letter which he would be unwilling to have seen. He did not wish to do any thing that would not bear the light. But now we have talked long enough for once.

QUESTIONS.

What is said of Carolstadt? What did Frederic do, when he heard the Reformers had abolished private masses? What answer did the Reformers give? Can you give an account of the first appearance of the Anabaptists, and of their religious sentiments? What did Luther write to Melancthon about the prophets? What bold step did Luther take, at this time?

CONVERSATION III.

Luther preaches at Wittemberg—He detects the imposture of the Anabaptist Prophets—Publishes his New Testament—Progress of the Reformation.

Peter. Mother, what did Luther do, when he came back to Wittemberg?

Mother. In order to calm the minds of the people, and to prevent any farther disturbance, he immediately appeared in public, in his favorite employment of preaching. And his discourses were admirably adapted to the state of feeling which prevailed among the people. He preached seven sermons, upon the great questions which agitated the church, in as short a time as he could. In these discourses, he showed his hearers how tenderly they ought to treat the consciences of their weaker brethren. He told them that many inconveniences, in the outward state of the church, should be borne with, till the minds of men were sufficiently enlightened to admit of more improvement. Communion in both

kinds, he said, ought not to be introduced by force; but that the people should be persuaded to it by arguments. Those who pleased might still receive it as they had been used to, till they were convinced of their error. Images might be tolerated in the church for the present, though he wished to see them wholly abolished; but they must by no means be worshipped. He condemned the practice of admitting people to the communion without preparation, and insisted on a lively faith in the Redeemer, without which the sacrament was nothing.

Caroline. I think the people were very glad to hear him preach again, mother.

Mother. I have no doubt they were, my dear. And the first time he went into the pulpit, he said to them, "Once more I am allowed to sound the Gospel in your ears; once more you may derive benefit from my exhortation. By and by death will come, and then we can do one another no good. How necessary, therefore, is it, that every one should be furnished with the principles which are to support him at that awful moment! These principles are the great doctrines of Christianity." He then went on to speak of these doctrines: 1. That we are by nature the children

of wrath, and that all our own thoughts, affections, and works, can do us no good ; 2. That we can only be saved by faith in Christ ; 3. That we must do good to each other in love. “ Without love,” said he, “ faith is a cold speculation. In this, dear friends, ye are, as yet, greatly defective. Nay, not a single vestige of love can I discover among you—a plain proof that ye are not grateful to God for his rich mercies.”

Elizabeth. That was plain preaching, mother.

Mother. Yes, my dear Elizabeth ; but it is just the kind of preaching that will do good. “ But,” said he, “ we have also need of patience. There must be persecution. Satan never sleeps ; but is constantly contriving something which will try our patience. Now patience begets hope. The Christian learns to commit his cause to God ; his faith increases more and more, and he grows stronger every day. The heart, furnished with these spiritual gifts, thinks little of itself ; but overflows with good will to his brother ; and for his sake forbears to do many things, which, otherwise, he might be allowed to do. To be plain, we ought to bear with the infirmities of our brethren, and to feed them with milk ; and not be so selfish as to think of going to heaven alone ; but

rather try to gain our brethren by kindness, and make them our companions in the road to the mansions of the blessed, though now they may be our enemies. If I had been with you, lately, while ye were abolishing the masses, I should have tried to moderate your heat. Your cause was good, but you managed it with too much violence. Among those opposed to us, I trust there are many brothers and sisters who belong to us, and must be drawn to us with the cords of love. Let your faith be firm as a rock; but let your charity be pliable, and accommodated to the circumstances of your neighbor. Some can only creep, others can walk briskly, and others again are so swift that they can almost fly. That the private masses ought to be abolished, is as clear as that God is to be worshipped; and with my voice and my pen I would strenuously maintain that they are a most horrid abomination. Yet I would not pull one person by force away from the mass. It does not become me to drag them away by the hair of the head, or to use any other violence; but rather to leave the word of God to its own operation, and to pray for them. By acting in this manner, the force of Scripture will penetrate the hearts of men, and produce an effectual

and durable change of sentiment ; and when men are become in general of the same mind, then they will agree in laying aside their erroneous forms and ceremonies. In all this, I am far from wishing to restore the use of the mass. All I mean is, that faith, in its very nature, is incapable of restraint or coercion."

Samuel. What a pity, mother, that the whole Christian world have not acted upon this principle. If men had never tried to force others to believe contrary to their own judgment, it would have saved a great deal of strife, as well as rivers of blood.

Mother. Yes ; but that is what men have been slow to learn. However, the use of force, in religious matters, is not to be charged upon the Christian religion. It is a relic of Paganism. In every heathen land, idolatry has been established by law. Our Savior expressly told his disciples, that his kingdom was not of this world, and forbade them to attempt establishing it by force of arms. But when Christians became so numerous as to form the strength of the Roman empire, the government called in its aid, and gave it the same footing which Paganism had before it. So, you see that church establishments are no part

of the Christian system; but they were grafted upon it from Paganism. The union, however, has proved most disastrous to the cause of truth and Christianity; and so it will ever prove, wherever it is adopted. But, though the principle of forcing men, by the sword, to believe as the church believes, has been generally abandoned in this country; yet, there is much spiritual despotism remaining in the church. But Luther goes on to say, "I preached, I wrote, I pressed on men's consciences, with the greatest earnestness, the word of God; but I used no force. And what has been the consequence? The word of God has given such a blow to Papal despotism as not one of the German princes, no, not even the emperor himself, could have done. It is not *I*—it is the divine word, which has done every thing. If it had been right to have sought a reform by violence and tumults, it would have been easy for me to have deluged Germany with blood. Had I been the least inclined to promote sedition, it was in my power, while I was at Worms, to have endangered the safety even of the emperor himself. The devil smiles in secret, when men pretend to support religion by seditious tumults; but he is

cut to the heart, when he sees them, in faith and patience, rely on the written word."

Samuel. I think such preaching must have put an end to the tumults in Wittemberg.

Mother. Yes, my son ; the people heard their beloved pastor with the greatest delight ; and peace and harmony were restored to the church.

Elizabeth. Well, mother, what did Luther do with the prophets ?

Mother. The associates of Stubner urged him to defend his pretensions openly before Luther. Luther met him and Cellary, and another man of their party, in the presence of Melancthon. He listened, patiently, till Stubner had finished relating his visions ; and then, remembering that nonsense was incapable of being confuted, he told him to take care what he did ; for he had said nothing that had the least warrant from Scripture. It all appeared to him to be either the work of his own imagination, or of an evil spirit.

Peter. How did the prophets like that ?

Mother. Cellary flew into a great rage, stamped on the floor, and struck the table with his hands ; being filled with resentment that Luther

should dare to say such things of so divine a person. But Stubner told Luther he would give him a proof that he was influenced by the Spirit of God; "for," said he, "I will reveal your own thoughts at this moment. You are inclined, after all, to believe my doctrine true."

Peter. Was that so, mother?

Mother. No; Luther was then thinking of the test, "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan." But they boasted and threatened, in the most extravagant manner, what they would do to establish their commission. But Luther sent them away with these words: "The God whom I serve and adore will confound your vanities." That very day they left the town.

Elizabeth. And now, mother, I suppose the Reformation went on finely.

Mother. It was not to be expected, my dear Elizabeth, that people just coming out from the midnight darkness of Popery, would, at once, become thorough and consistent Christians. Luther had to mourn over the inconsistencies of many of his followers, who abused their Christian liberty. He had written against Monks, and in favor of the marriage of the clergy. Many of the monks, who had no piety, took advantage of

this,* and flocked to Wittemberg and married, without any other motive than to gratify themselves. However, some of those who deserted the monasteries were shining examples of piety, and devoted themselves to the preaching of the gospel; and through their labors, with those of Luther and others, many souls were converted. But the Reformer complained that wickedness still abounded, even among those that professed to abhor Popery.

Peter. But, mother, if I had been Luther, I should have been afraid to stay at Wittemberg. Did not the Papists try to kill him?

Mother. My son, he valued the cause of Christ more than his own life. I will read part of a letter he wrote to one of his friends, about this time, which will show the dangerous condition in which he was placed: "I live," said he, "in the midst of enemies, who have a right, according to law, to kill me, every hour."

Elizabeth. How was that, mother? how could his enemies have a right to murder him?

Mother. You recollect, my dear, about the Edict of Worms.* By that Luther was in a

* See "*The Dawn*," p. —

measure outlawed, so that any good Catholic might kill him.

Samuel. And I suppose there were thousands who were ready to do it, if they could get a chance.

Mother. I have no doubt of it. But, in the midst of these dangers, he says, "I know that Christ is Lord of all, that the Father hath put all things under his feet, and among the rest, the wrath of the emperor and all evil spirits. If it please Christ that I should be slain, let me die in his name; if it do not please him, who shall slay me?" And then he goes on to ask the prayers of his friend, and to mourn that there was so little heart-religion, even among the friends of the Reformation.

Elizabeth. That was a noble spirit, mother. But how could he do any thing, while in such danger of his life?

Mother. He kept at his work, and trusted in God to take care of him. In the course of this year, 1522, he published the New Testament, which he had translated during his confinement. He then went on with the translation of the Old Testament, publishing the books, from time to time, until he completed the whole in the year

1530. But in this work he was assisted by Justus Jonas and Philip Melancthon.

Samuel. I suppose this was a great help to the Reformation.

Mother. Yes; the effects were soon felt in Germany. Great numbers now read the precious word of God in their own language, and saw, with their own eyes, the truth of the doctrines preached by the Reformers.

Peter. Well, I suppose the Papists were very angry with him for this; for they hate the Bible above all things.

Mother. Yes; and well they may; for it pointedly condemns the abominable doctrines and practices of the church of Rome. The Popish princes ordered Luther's Bible to be burnt; and they were enraged still more, when he advised the people patiently to bear their sufferings, without resisting their governors, but not to come forward of their own accord and give up their Bibles, nor to do any thing to approve the conduct of their rulers.

Elizabeth. I suppose Luther's Bible must have put duke George in a great rage.

Mother. Yes; and he was very angry with Frederic for suffering the principles of the Re-

formation to grow so much ; and he encouraged the bishop of Misnia to visit the churches in the Elector's dominions. But, as Frederic would not allow the bishop to use any force against his subjects, his visit was of little use to Popery. He preached and warned the people ; but his arguments in favor of masses, of the Pope's infallibility, and of other absurdities, appeared too ridiculous to the people to have any effect upon their minds.

Samuel. Mother, why did not the Reformers, before this time, come out from the Church of Rome, and form themselves into a separate church ? I don't see how they could stay in such a corrupt church.

Mother. Luther had bent all his efforts, by preaching and writing, to inform the minds of the people, and draw them away from those false grounds of dependence, which were ruining their souls. This he thought was of the first importance. But now, as the Reformers multiplied, they began to feel serious inconvenience from the want of a separate form of church government, by which they would be freed from the superstitions and tyranny of the church of Rome. Serious inquirers after truth, were greatly harrassed

by the Popish party ; and without some plan of union among themselves, they could not provide the people with faithful preaching and pastoral instruction. Under these circumstances, the pastors of several of the principal towns in Saxony, applied to Luther, to see if some plan could not be contrived, suited to the necessities of the case. In consequence of this, he published a little book on the subject, in which he recommended other churches to make such improvements as had been introduced at Wittemberg. Luther saw also that, as many of the monasteries and Popish colleges were deserted in consequence of the Reformation, the revenues by which they were supported would be liable to be abused. He therefore recommended that these revenues should be collected into a sort of common treasury, and applied to the support of schools and hospitals, and to maintain preachers of the Gospel:

Peter. I think the people would like that, mother ?

Mother. But it gave great offence to the Popish clergy. Nothing touches them to the quick, like taking away their money. But, all this time, the bigoted duke George was not inactive. During Luther's confinement, he had

got a severe edict passed against the Reformers, by the Emperor's government at Nuremberg. And now, he was doing all in his power to carry it into effect. He persecuted those who favored the doctrines of the Reformation, in his own dominions, with great cruelty. He also wrote to the Elector Frederic, and to his brother John, Duke of Saxony, trying to persuade them to follow his example.

Elizabeth. I hope they did not do it. I am sure the Elector would not.

Mother. No; nor his brother John, neither; for he was a friend of the Reformation. But duke George carried on his persecutions with great cruelty. He called all the students within his power or influence away from the colleges where he suspected the principles of the Reformation were taught. The clergy, within his dominions, who favored Lutheranism, found no favor at his hands. And, in order to destroy Luther's Bible, he bought all the copies he could find, and severely punished all who refused to give it up. The Popish clergy, emboldened by the duke's proceedings, raged with increased violence. In their visits through the country, the bishops threatened the most cruel punishments

against all who should dare to read Luther's translation of the Bible, or go into the dominions of the Elector of Saxony to hear the Reformers preach.

Samuel. Did they think they could stop the Reformation in that way, mother?

Mother. No people are so blind as tyrants, who oppose the progress of truth by force. These blind persecutors defeated their own object, by their cruelties. The schools and colleges at Leipsic were more and more deserted. As they were not allowed the privilege of inquiring after the truth at Leipsic, they went to Wittemberg, and there many of them became famous for rational inquiry and Christian liberty. But all the opposition of the Papists could not prevent the people from reading Luther's translation of the Bible. It was read by almost every body throughout Germany. Women of rank studied it with great diligence, so that they were able to defend the doctrines of the Reformation against bishops, monks, and Catholic doctors.

Elizabeth. That must have made the Papists more angry still. What did they do now?

Mother. They saw that, as they could not prevent the people from reading the Bible, they

must try to discredit Luther's translation; and Jerome Emser, a Leipsic doctor, and a counselor of duke George, was employed for this purpose. He first published his "*Notes on Luther's New Testament;*" in which he abused the Reformer and quarrelled with the truth. After that, he published what he called "*A correct translation of the New Testament into German.*" But this was only a copy of Luther's translation, with such alterations as to make it favor the doctrines of the church of Rome.

Samuel. How did he dare alter the Bible, mother? I should think he would have been afraid of the punishments which God threatens against those who take from the Bible or add to it.*

Mother. The Papists stop at nothing which they think necessary to maintain their cause. But as soon as Emser's Testament was published, duke George issued a proclamation in its favor, in which he abused Luther and his followers; but especially his translation of the New Testament. But Emser, after speaking of his translation of the New Testament, in connexion with Luther's, said that he was by no means con-

* Rev. 22: 18, 19.

vinced of the expediency of trusting the Scriptures with the ignorant multitude.

Samuel. And then the Papists are careful to keep the multitude in ignorance; for they never encourage learning among the common people. I think their object must be to maintain their own tyranny over both the minds and bodies of the people.

Mother. Yes; that is doubtless the reason. They know that where the common people can read, and have the Bible, they will soon see that their priests are imposing upon them. And so it is every where. If we see men, who have the power over their fellow creatures, preventing them from learning to read, we may be sure they fear that they will see the injustice and oppression which is exercised towards them, and revolt against it. But duke George was not the only prince who persecuted the Reformers. Henry, duke of Brunswick, and Ferdinand, archduke of Austria, the Emperor's brother, followed his example. Ferdinand issued a severe edict against the publication of Luther's translation of the Bible; and forbade the people to have any copies either of that, or of any other of Luther's books. In Flanders many were put to death, or deprived

of their property, in the most tyrannical manner. At Antwerp, the monks were remarkably favorable to the Reformation. Many of them suffered death, with patience and firmness. Others were compelled to recant, and then severely punished.

Elizabeth. What, mother, did they punish them after they had recanted? That was very cruel, I think. God is merciful, and forgives sinners; but it seems to me the church of Rome has no mercy at all.

Mother. The church of Rome, my dear, forgives all sins but heresy. A man may commit any other crime, and be forgiven for a little money. But if he calls in question any of the doctrines, or rites and ceremonies of the church, there is no mercy for him.

Caroline. Did it not make Luther feel very bad, mother, to see how his followers were persecuted?

Mother. Yes; and if he had been disposed to fight his enemies with their own weapons, he might easily have persuaded the leading characters in Germany, as well as the common people, to take up arms against them. But he contented himself by exposing the unreasonableness, ignorance, and blasphemy of the Papists. The Bible

requires submission to our rulers ; and this, Luther preached. But he made use of a more powerful weapon than the sword, against Popery. He used the sword of truth. In the course of the year 1522, he published several tracts ; one of which was entitled, " Martin Luther against the order falsely called the ecclesiastical order of pope and bishops." In this work, he calls himself THE PREACHER. The Pope's bulls, he said, had stripped him of the titles of priest and doctor ; but he willingly resigned them, having no desire for any mark of distinction which was given him by Papal authority. He then goes on to expose the corruptions of the Romish hierarchy, and insists that it ought to be overthrown. But he is careful to say that this should not be done by force ; but only by the operation of the word of God, by which the whole system would be undermined.

While all these things were going on, the word of God was every where taking deeper root. It was preached with much success, in various parts of Germany, particularly at Nuremberg, at Francfort on the Maine, at Ulm, and at Halle in Swabia. At Milberg, the Gospel was preached by John Drace, a learned Reformer. At Bremen

and Magdeburg, it was preached by two monks, one of whom had escaped from prison at Antwerp. At Zerbst, the finest city in the principality of Anhalt, Luther himself preached to a crowded assembly, with great effect on the minds of the people. The Reformation also began at Stettin and Sunda, two great market towns in Pomerania. The inhabitants of Stettin sent to Wittenberg for two pious ministers. But at Sunda, the people, in a disorderly and riotous manner, took the Reformation into their own hands, broke in pieces the images of the saints, and drove the monks from the monastery.

Peter. Well, mother, I think they did just right. They had borne long enough with these things; and I don't wonder that they took it into their own hands.

Mother. It will never do for Christians, my son, to adopt such sentiments. We must lead a quiet and peaceable life. And if the government which God has placed over us is tyrannical and oppressive, we must not rise up in arms against it; but patiently wait for Providence to bring about a reformation. Riots and seditions and tumults are opposed to every principle of the

gospel.—A man went from Wittemberg to Stolpen, in Pomerania, and spread a knowledge of the truth there.

Caroline. Was he a minister, mother?

Mother. No, my dear; he was a poor man who had been at work for Luther. You see how much one faithful Christian can do. Here was a poor laboring man, who introduced the Gospel into a great city. Cnophius and Bugenhagen were schoolmasters, of great note, at Treptow. Pupils from all quarters flocked to that place, to hear their instructions. Many came even from Livonia and Westphalia. But they were so persecuted, on account of favoring the Reformation, that they had to leave the place. Bugenhagen went to Wittemberg; and Cnophius, with his Livonian scholars, travelled to Riga, Revel, and Dolpat, preaching the Gospel, and exposing the corruptions of Popery. The government of Hamburg openly renounced the authority of the church of Rome; and the inhabitants of Friesland sent to Wittemberg for ministers to preach the Gospel. The Reformation had also spread in Switzerland and Alsace.

Samuel. O, I am glad to hear that the truth

was making such rapid progress. Can't you tell us more particulars about what took place in the different places you have mentioned?

Mother. In most of the places I have mentioned in Germany, no farther particulars are known. But there are many interesting things about the Reformation in Switzerland; which I mean to tell you, after I get through with Germany.—At Hartmuth, near Francfort, also, the truth took fast hold upon the hearts of the people. All Luther's books were publicly exposed for sale, in defiance of the imperial edict. At Delft, also, in Holland, there was much inquiry on the subject of religion. The principal of an academy, at that place, writing to some of the Reformers, says, "Our adversaries are daily meditating mischief against the church; but if we were but allowed to preach once, in public, there would be an end of their whole institution, the pillars of which are already undermined, by a few little discourses of mine, in my own academy." But it is now growing late, my dear children. It is time for us to prepare for sleep.

QUESTIONS.

What did Luther do, when he returned to Wittenberg? What was the effect of his preaching? What passed between Luther and the prophets? What particulars can you relate of the progress of the Reformation, and the persecution of the Reformers?

CONVERSATION IV.

New Pope—Diet of Nuremberg—Death of Adrian VI.

Peter. Mother, you told us about the death of Leo; but you did not tell us who was made Pope after him.

Mother. Adrian VI. was elected Pope, after the death of Leo. He had been the teacher of Charles V. before he was made Emperor.

Samuel. Then I suppose he could make the Emperor do any thing he pleased for Popery. But what sort of a man was he?

Mother. He gave more evidence of sincerity than any man that had filled the papal chair, for a long time; and his manners and morals were better. He professed, also, really to desire a Reformation in the church. He was a learned man, and one of the best theologians among the Roman Catholics. The more honest part of the Papists were pleased with his election. But the Italian clergy did not like it. In the first place,

he was a Frenchman; and they did not like to have a foreigner set over them. And then, he was anxious for a reformation, and they did not desire it. The court of Rome was too corrupt to wish for any reform. Besides all this, he had been known to maintain that a pope might err, in a matter of faith.

Caroline. Did he reform the church, mother?

Mother. He did not see that the whole system of Popery was wrong; and that the abuses which were so loudly complained of, were the natural and necessary fruits of bad principles. All his efforts to reform the church must therefore fail, because they could not reach the root of the evil.

Peter. What did he do, mother?

Mother. The first thing he did, was, to send his legate to the imperial diet, assembled at Nuremberg, with a letter to the German princes. This letter, or brieve, as it was called, was full of the most violent abuse of Luther, and of the Reformation. Although the sentence of Leo X. against him, was ordered by the Diet of Worms to be executed immediately, yet, the Pope said, he continued to teach the same errors, and to corrupt the morals of the people.

Peter. Mother, I thought Luther's object was to reform the morals of the people, and to make them pious. But I don't see how he could corrupt them, for Popery had made them as bad as they could be.

Mother. True, my son; but we shall see what the Pope called the morals of the people. He says, *the worst part* of the mischief was, that he was not only supported by the vulgar, but several persons of distinction had begun to shake off their *obedience to the clergy*.

Samuel. Then, I suppose, in the eyes of this good Pope, the chief point, in the morals of the people, was, *obedience to the clergy*.

Mother. Yes; if they would but obey the clergy, they might get drunk, and be guilty of all manner of licentious conduct. All this could be pardoned by the priest. But if they refused to obey the clergy and believe just what the church tells them, they must be persecuted, and hunted like wild beasts, and burnt at the stake,—In the conclusion of the Pope's brieve, he exhorted the Diet to endeavor to bring back to a sense of duty this arch-heretic and his followers. "But," said he, "if the ulcerations and extent of the cancer

appear to be such as to leave no place for mild remedies, the knife must be used."

Elizabeth. I suppose, mother, this was what he called reforming the church.

Mother. I suppose it was a part of the Reformation he desired, to put down Luther and his followers. He told his legate to inform the Diet how much the Pope was troubled on account of the progress of Lutheranism; and how necessary it was to take vigorous measures to put it down. But then the legate was to own that all the confusions introduced by Luther, were the effects of men's sins; and particularly the sins of the clergy and prelates. For some years past, he said, many abuses, abominations, and excesses, had been committed in the court of Rome, and even in the Holy See itself; and it was no wonder if the evil had passed from the head to the members, from the Popes to the bishops and other clergy. "We have long," said the Pope, "every one of us, turned to his own way, and for a long time, none have done good, no not one. Nothing shall be wanting, on my part, to reform the court of Rome, whence perhaps all the mischief hath originated; that, as this court hath been the source of the corruptions which have thence

spread among the lower orders, so from the same a sound reformation may proceed."

Samuel. Why, mother, I think the Pope was as great a heretic as Luther; for this great Reformer never said any thing worse than that, of the court of Rome.

Mother. This acknowledgment is of great value, because it places the charges of corruption, made by the Reformers against the court of Rome and the Popish clergy in general, beyond dispute. It shows, by the confession of the Pope himself, that there was need of just the Reformation for which Luther was contending.

Samuel. I should think the Popish clergy would not have liked such confessions, mother.

Mother. It is said that the cardinals at Rome were much displeased with him on this account. However, some writers doubt whether Adrian was really sincere in his professions about reforming the church. After all these acknowledgments, his legate told the princes that they must not wonder if all these abuses could not be soon corrected. The disease, he said, was complicated and inveterate, and the cure must proceed step by step, lest, by attempting to do all at once, every thing should be thrown into confusion. Of this,

Luther says, "You are to understand these words to mean, that there must be an interval of *some ages* between every step."

Samuel. Mother, that is just the way people now talk, when they want to quiet their consciences, while living in sin.

Mother. Yes, my son; while people are still living in sin, they are ready to think it impossible for them to break off at once. And when we tell them there is no other way, they will get angry, and call us imprudent and overzealous. This appears to have been the only difference between this pontiff and Luther. The Pope was for a *gradual* reform; but Luther for an *immediate* one. And it is true, no reformation was ever brought about by telling men that they must reform hereafter. They will bear to be told that they are great sinners, provided they are allowed to sleep on in their sins for the present. But when we tell them that they must repent and break off their sins now, they will either obey the truth, or be roused to opposition. However, I suppose we ought to give Adrian some credit for his sincerity, for he told the German Diet that he would not have accepted the office of Pope, for any other purpose than to reform the church, to

prefer and reward neglected men of merit and virtue, and to do all the duties of a lawful successor of St. Peter.

Elizabeth. Well, mother, what effect had these things upon the Diet?

Mother. At first, the Pope's brieve and the legate's explanations, seemed to have made a strong impression upon the Diet. Among other things, the legate accused the clergy of Nuremberg of preaching impious doctrines, and insisted on their being imprisoned; and the bishops and other great men among the Popish clergy, rose up, and in a clamorous manner, called out, "*Luther must be taken off*, and those who spread his sentiments must be imprisoned." But the German princes were not to be satisfied with the empty professions of the Pope, nor carried away with the rage of the priests. They told the Pope's legate that he had been misinformed about the clergy of Nuremberg; for they were highly esteemed by the people; and if any harsh measures were taken against them, it might lead to sedition and civil commotions. As to the Pope's complaint against Luther, they said they were always ready to do all they could to root out heresies of every kind. But they had good reason for not

carrying into effect the Edict of Worms. All ranks and orders of the people, they said, made heavy complaints against the court of Rome; and they were now, through Luther's writings, so well convinced of the truth of these charges, that any attempt to execute the sentence of the Pope against him would be attended with dangerous consequences. The people would look upon it as an attempt to oppress the truth and maintain those abuses and impieties which could no longer be borne. In this way, they said, Germany would soon be involved in tumults, rebellion, and civil wars. They thought, therefore, that some milder measures ought to be tried. They praised the Pope's pious intention to reform the court of Rome, which he had owned to be the source of all the mischief. But they said there were particular grievances and abuses, which they would distinctly set forth. If these were not corrected, it would be in vain to expect the removal of the evils which agitated Germany. As the Pope had asked their advice, they said they would give it freely. He was not to suppose that they had their eyes solely on the business of Luther, but on a multitude of other evils, which had taken deep root, by long usage. The best remedy they could

advise, for all these evils, was, that the Pope, with the consent of the Emperor, should appoint a council, to be held in some convenient part of Germany, and that every member of it should have liberty to speak freely, and give their advice, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Finally, they said they would request the Elector of Saxony to prevent the Lutheran party from printing books or preaching sermons on subjects of a seditious tendency; and, in general, they would do all they could to confine the preachers, for the present, to plain practical preaching, and make them wait for the determination of the council, in regard to disputed points. As to the priests who had married wives, or the monks who had left their convents, they said the civil laws had made no provision for such cases; but if they should be guilty of crimes of a different nature, they would take care to have them punished. This answer was delivered in writing to Cheregato, the Pope's legate.

Samuel. I suppose he did not relish such an answer very much.

Mother. No; he was quite displeased. He said that neither the Pope, nor the Emperor, nor any Christian prince, had ever expected to hear

such language from the Diet. Since Luther was condemned, he had not only persevered in his old errors, but had been guilty of new transgressions. He ought therefore to have been punished more severely. The negligence of the princes, he said, was offensive to God, the Pope, and the Emperor; and their reasons for not executing the sentence of the Pope, were by no means satisfactory. Men ought, he said, to suffer any inconveniences rather than to endanger the Catholic unity and the salvation of souls. He was also displeased with their manner of requesting a general council. It would give offence to his *holy master*, the Pope; for they had required that it should be with the consent of the Emperor, that it should be *free*, and that it should be held in Germany. All this, he said, was tying up the hands of the Pope. He was also very much displeased with their promise to prevent, *as much as they could*, the circulation of heretical books. "The sentences of the Pope and the Emperor," said he, "ought to be implicitly obeyed. The books should be burnt, and the printers and venders of them duly punished. There is no other way to put down this pernicious sect. It is from the reading of their books that all these evils have arisen."

Samuel. There is the difficulty, mother, with all who wish to support false principles, and maintain power against right. They are afraid of the light. But truth is not afraid of being overturned by error.

Mother. That is true, my son. But the legate was particularly displeased with what the princes said about the married clergy; because they had spoken about their being tried by the civil laws; while the church of Rome hold that the magistrates have no authority over the clergy and religious orders. He entreated the Diet to correct this part of their answer, because it was opposed to the rights of the church.

Elizabeth. I should not think the princes would have been pleased with such a haughty, domineering answer.

Mother. No; his answer gave great offence to the Diet. They said he had shown a quick sense to every thing that might appear to diminish the authority of the church of Rome, but little disposition to relieve Germany from the oppressions under which it groaned. But they would not multiply words about the matter, for they had other business to do, of still greater importance. So they told Cheregato to be content with their

former answer, till they could send a national memorial to the Pope, and receive an answer, respecting all their grievances.

Peter. I suppose he was very angry at that, mother.

Mother. Yes; he was so much offended, that he left the Diet, and went away from Nuremberg. This was considered as disrespectful to the Diet. But they went on with their business, and made out a memorial to the Pope, setting forth one hundred grievances, which they wished to have corrected; and telling him that if they were not redressed speedily, the burden of them would become so oppressive and insupportable that the princes and people in general neither *could nor would* endure them any longer. Necessity would, therefore, compel them to use every means in their power to deliver themselves from the tyranny of the clergy.

Samuel. I think they were growing very bold, or they would not have dared to speak so to the Pope.

Mother. Yes; and this showed that the power of the Pope was declining, and that the German princes were beginning to understand their rights.

Elizabeth. Mother, what were the hundred grievances of which they complained?

Mother. I need not mention every one by itself; but I will tell you the substance of them all. They complained of the large sums of money which were extorted from the Germans by dispensations, absolutions, and indulgencies, and spent by the Popes in maintaining their relations; at the same time that it opened a door for all sorts of crimes.

Caroline. What was a *dispensation*, mother?

Mother. The Pope claims the authority of setting aside both the laws of God and the laws of the church, in particular cases. And when he does it, his act is called a *dispensation*.

Samuel. Is it possible that the Pope claims such authority as that! What abominations it must lead to.

Mother. Again, the Diet complained that the Pope directed cases, where religion was concerned, to be carried to Rome, instead of being tried in Germany; and that the priests were not allowed to be tried before the civil magistrates for their crimes. By this means, the priests could commit all manner of wickedness, without being punished.

Elizabeth. Why, mother, I should think, if there was any difference, the priests ought to be

punished more than the common people, for the same crimes.

Mother. We should think so ; but it was very convenient for the priests, who were the most licentious of all the people, to be exempted from the jurisdiction of the civil rulers ; and then, as they would always be tried by priests, they could be sure of getting clear. But another grievance of which the princes complained, was the money that the priests made the people pay for administering the sacraments, celebrating the mass, burying the dead, and for licences to keep concubines. And many other things they mentioned, which you would not understand.

Samuel. Was good prince Frederic at this Diet, mother ?

Mother. No, my son ; he was getting old and infirm, and he expected there would be stormy times about Luther, and he did not go to the Diet. But the Pope sent him two most abusive letters by Cheregato, which offended him very much.

Elizabeth. I think the minds of the German princes were much changed since the Diet of Worms, if they would do all this when Frederic was not there.

Mother. But there was one part of their reply with which Frederic was much displeased. They said they would not allow ministers to preach, nor the Reformers to print books on disputed points. This, the Elector saw, would harrass and perplex those faithful ministers, who wished to preach the Gospel, and that it would hinder the truth. He therefore directed a formal protest to be entered, in his name, on the records of the Diet, against this part of their proceedings. The proceedings of this Diet, with the Pope's brieve, and their answers, with their hundred grievances, were published throughout Germany, and did much good to the cause of the Reformation. Luther took advantage of this, and addressed a very interesting letter to the German princes, on the affairs of the church and the Empire. In the conclusion, he says, "By this decree, I do maintain that Martin Luther stands absolved from all the consequences of the former sentence of the Pope and Emperor, until a future council shall have tried his cause."

Samuel. But I suppose the Pope did not like this Edict, did he mother ?

Mother. No ; the proceedings of the Diet produced much discontent at Rome. The cardinals

were quite out of humor with Adrian, for acknowledging the corruptions of the church, which they said he ought to have concealed; and they were very angry with Cheregato, on account of his haughty answer to the German princes. They said he ought to have given up all little matters, and strained every nerve to get Luther condemned. But by the course he had pursued, he had increased the ill-humor of the Germans, and effected nothing for the church of Rome. The authority of the church, they said, was weakened, and the sources of its wealth stopped; and the heretics would become more daring and presumptuous than ever.

Samuel. Well, it seems to me that the Pope and his legate could not have done any thing better for the cause of the Reformers. It is strange they did not see that they were putting weapons into the hands of their opposers.

Mother. When wicked men undertake to oppose the cause of God, he often blinds their eyes, so that they run on heedlessly to their own destruction. This was the case with Pharaoh, and with the Jews who rejected Christ; and so it has been in many other cases. After this, the Reformers appealed to the confessions of Adrian

and to the hundred grievances of the Diet of Nuremberg, to support their charges against the church of Rome. Poor Adrian was placed between two fires. On the one hand, he was astonished at what he considered the obstinacy of the Reformers; and on the other hand, he was disgusted with the dissolute manners of the court of Rome. And not being able to correct either the one or the other, he wished himself back at Louvain. But soon after receiving from his legate an account of the proceedings of the Diet at Nuremberg, he died; and over his tomb was placed this remarkable epitaph: "Here lies Adrian VI. who esteemed the Papal government to be the greatest misfortune of his life."

QUESTIONS.

Who was made Pope, after the death of Leo X? What sort of a man was he? What was the first thing he did? What confessions did the Pope make, and what did he ask the Diet of Nuremberg to do? What did the princes answer, and what did the Pope's legate reply? What followed?

CONVERSATION V.

Critical state of the Reformation, after the Diet of Nuremberg—Persecution of the Queen of Denmark—Persecution in Flanders—Martyrdom of Voes and Esch.

Peter. Mother, I want to hear more about the Reformation. Will you tell us how things went on, after the Diet of Nuremberg?

Mother. The cause of truth was still surrounded with difficulty and danger. Although the Diet had boldly withstood the Pope, yet they appointed the Vicar of Constance to oppose Lutheranism, as they called it, throughout Germany.

Elizabeth. I suppose that brought Luther into great danger.

Mother. The Elector and his court were so fearful about Luther, that they tried to persuade him to return to the castle. But, that you may see how God supports his servants, in trying circumstances, I will read to you a part of a letter he sent to his friend Spalatinus: "No, no," says he, "do not think that I will again hide myself

in a corner, however madly the monsters may rage. You must see now that the *hand of God* is in this business. 'This is the second year that my life has been preserved, beyond the expectation of every one. I am yet alive, and the Elector is not only safe, but the fury of the German princes is less violent than it was last year. It is by the providence of God that our prince finds himself concerned in this religious contest; and Jesus Christ will have no difficulty to defend him. However, if I could, without actually disgracing the Gospel, find a way of separating him from my difficulties and dangers, I would not hesitate to give up my life. I had expected and *hoped* that, within this year, I should have been dragged to death. But it appears very plain that, at present, we are not able to comprehend the designs of God, in this matter; therefore it will be safest for us to say, in the spirit of humble resignation, 'THY WILL BE DONE.'"

Samuel. O, mother, Luther had great faith. If Christians now trusted in God, with such strong confidence, don't you think Christ's kingdom would be built up a great deal faster than it now is?

Mother. Yes, my son; if Christians generally would stop depending upon the means that are em-

ployed to build up Christ's kingdom, and look to God alone, to carry on his own work, they would see wonders. Yet there are some, I have no doubt, who trust in God, with as strong confidence as Luther did. And wherever such men go, the hand of the Lord is with them, and Revivals of Religion follow their labors.

Peter. Well, I suppose the Reformation went on bravely, now.

Mother. This, my son, was a most critical period in the progress of that great cause. Both Luther and the Elector of Saxony were in great danger. Duke George had tried to persuade the Regency at Nuremberg to force Frederic to punish Luther.

Caroline. I don't know what Regency means, mother.

Mother. When a king or an Emperor dies, before his son or heir is old enough to take his place, some one or more persons are employed to manage the affairs of the government in his name. This is called a *Regency*.

Peter. Was the Emperor dead, mother?

Mother. No; but he was absent from Germany, carrying on a war; and it was necessary

that there should be a Regency to manage the affairs of the Empire.

Elizabeth. Did the Regency do as Duke George wished them to?

Mother. No; they told him that, as he was the one that was offended, it would be more proper for him to apply to the Elector for redress. But there is strong reason to believe that Duke George was trying to get possession of the dominions of his nephews, the Elector Frederic and Duke John.

Samuel. Is it possible, mother, that he could be such a hypocrite, as to be pretending so much regard to religion, while he was only trying to enrich himself, at the expense of his relations?

Mother. He no doubt persuaded himself that he should be doing a service to the church; because, if he had possession of his nephews' dominions, he could put down Lutheranism by the sword. And with the Papists, any thing is lawful, which promotes the interests of the church of Rome.

Peter. Did Frederic know this, mother? I should not think he would let them take away his government peaceably.

Mother. Frederic was a wise man; and he was not ignorant of the designs of his enemies. He saw the conspiracy that was forming between the Pope, the Emperor, and several of the most bigoted German princes, to crush the infant Reformation, and every prince that was friendly to it.

Peter. Well, if he was *wise*, I think he had not much courage; or he would not have been easy, while he saw others trying to rob him of his rights.

Mother. We have already seen that Frederic was a very conscientious man. And, in this respect, I would hold him up as a pattern. When he was sure what was duty, he never wanted courage to do it. But when there was any doubt about it, he was afraid to act, lest he should do wrong. This is a very good principle. If you have any doubt whether any action is right, the safest way always is, not to do it. In the year 1523, this good prince thought very much of defending his persecuted subjects by *force*. But, as he was subject to the emperor in one sense, and to the Pope in another, he was afraid it would be wrong to resist their authority. In this state of mind, he required Luther, Bugenhagius,

and Melancthon to give him, in writing, their deliberate opinion upon the question; "In case any of his subjects should suffer violence from the Emperor or from any of the German princes, on account of their religion, would it be right for the Elector of Saxony to protect them by force of arms?"

Elizabeth. That was a hard question, mother, when it so much concerned themselves and their cause. If they say *no*, I shall think them very honest.

Mother. Yes; the answer of these men shows most clearly, that their object was not to excite sedition and tumults, as they had been accused. They told him it would not be right for him to go to war, on their account, for several reasons: 1. The princes were not fully convinced of the truth of the doctrines preached by the Reformers; 2. Their subjects had not asked their protection against violence and persecution; 3. The several states had not deliberated on the point; 4. Those who take up arms in their own defence, ought, before all things, to be sure of the justice of their cause.

Samuel. I think these men could not have given a better evidence of the honesty of their

hearts and the purity of their motives. But, it seems to me the affairs of the Reformation were becoming very critical.

Mother. Yes, my son; but the Lord soon cleared away the dark clouds that hung over this rising cause. The Emperor was so much engaged in other matters, that he found it impossible to give much attention to these affairs, in Germany; without him the rest of the enemies of the truth, could do very little.

Peter. How was the hand of the Lord in that, mother?

Mother. The hand of the Lord is in every thing, my son.

Peter. How then can we be to blame for doing wrong, if we are doing what he wants to have done? I don't see how that can be.

Mother. Mr. Smith wanted to have his dog Trim killed, because he worried the sheep. Yet he did not like to do it himself. But one day Tom Jones got angry with Mr. Smith, and killed old Trim. Now, did not Tom Jones do what Mr. Smith wished to have done?

Peter. Yes, mother, he did.

Mother. But, was it not as bad for him to kill

the dog, as if Mr. Smith had not wished to have him killed?

Peter. Yes, I think it was; for he did it out of spite.

Mother. Well, now you see how it is that God employs wicked men to do what he wishes to have done. He does not force men to do wickedly, against their own wills. But he lets them go on, in their own way, according to their own choice; and yet he overrules their actions to accomplish his own purposes. When he wanted to punish the Israelites, he sent against them the king of Assyria, who carried them away to another land. But this wicked man did not think he was doing the will of God. He was acting out the disposition of his own proud and ambitious heart.* And the Lord appears to have so ordered the affairs of Europe, as to find employment for the Emperor in defending his dominions from foreign invasion, and in promoting his own ambitious designs, in order to divert his attention from the state of religion in Germany, until the rising cause of reform had taken too deep root to be overturned. Yet, the Lord surrounds his faithful servants with difficulties enough to try their patience, and give

*2d Kings 18.—Isa. 10: 5, 6, 7.

them an opportunity of trusting the promises of his word. If every thing went on smoothly, and we had no difficulties to overcome, we should have no chance to exercise faith in God. There were many cruel men in power, who greatly harrassed the church of God; and from them, many individuals suffered persecution. Among the former, Ferdinand, arch-duke of Austria, and brother of the Emperor, distinguished himself. His sister was the wife of Christiern II., King of Denmark, who was driven from his country, because the people did not like him. She had read Luther's books, and openly professed the reformed religion. As they were leaving their country, with twenty ships, they were overtaken with a storm, and reduced to the last extremity. At length, however, they landed in Zealand. From that place, he sent to his brother-in-law, Charles V., hoping that he would help him in recovering his dominions. The queen also came to Nuremberg to ask the aid of her brother Ferdinand.

Elizabeth. Well, mother, he surely would pity her, in her trouble, if she did not think just as he did about religion.

Mother. You remember Christ tells us, that the preaching of the Gospel shall separate friends,

so that a man's foes shall be among his own relations. So it was in this case. Ferdinand hated the truth more than he loved his sister. He told her he heartily wished she was not his sister; and said he would rather she had been sunk in the sea, than that she should have become acquainted with the doctrines of the Reformer.

Elizabeth. O how cruel and unfeeling that was. In her trouble, I should think it would have broken her heart. What did she say to him?

Mother. She said, "Certainly we are descended from the same mother; yet I must adhere closely to the word of God, and to that ONLY, without the least respect of persons. In all other matters, I am ready to obey my brother's pleasure. But if, on that account, he refuses to own me for his sister, I shall try to bear the cross patiently."—She related her situation to the princes at Nuremberg, in such a feeling manner, that every one of them shed tears. Yet, they would do nothing for her, because she had embraced the Reformation. And she died soon after; her death being hastened, as was supposed, by the unkind treatment of her relations. Great pains were taken, by persons of distinction, to

persuade her to return to Popery ; but she remained firm to the last, and died in peace, trusting in Jesus.

Caroline. O, mother ! I don't see how any man could be so cruel towards his own sister.— Why could he not let her think for herself about religion, and love her too ?

Mother. My dear, human nature is the same every where. And proud and haughty people, who are rich and great in this world, hate nothing worse than true religion. They cannot bear its humbling truths ; and they will disown their nearest relations, rather than see them the humble followers of Jesus. Cases of persecution like this are frequent, even at this day.

Samuel. I am glad to hear, mother, that the Reformation had begun so early in Denmark.

Mother. Yes ; it is always gratifying to see the progress of the truth. About this time, the Reformation began in Denmark, Sweden, Hungary, Bohemia and Silesia ; but I will not now mention any particulars of its progress in these places, because I mean to take some of them up separately, after we get through with Germany. But nowhere did the enemies of the truth rage so fiercely as in Flanders. It was carried on by

the bigoted and furious Alexander.* He was armed with the authority of the Pope, and supported by the united power of the inquisition and civil government; and he exercised vengeance without mercy. The writings of Luther were read by the Augustine monks at Antwerp, and many of them embraced his sentiments. Some of them were shut up in prison, till they recanted; but three of them remained firm, in spite of persuasion, threats, and long confinement.

Samuel. And I suppose they were brought to the stake.

Mother. Yes, they were condemned to suffer death; and on the day fixed for their execution, the youngest of the three was brought out into the market place. There, he was directed to kneel down before a table, covered like a communion table. Every body fixed their eyes upon him; but he was perfectly calm, not showing the least sign of fear.

Caroline. O how could he feel so, mother, when he knew they were going to burn him alive?

Mother. Death had no terrors to him. He looked forward to the glories of heaven, which

*See "The Dawn."

were before him. Jesus has taken away the sting of death, so that those who trust in him, have nothing to fear.

Peter. But, mother, it is so painful to be burnt alive; I should not like to die so, if I was prepared to die.

Mother. My son, if you are not willing to suffer for Christ's sake, he will not own you as one of his followers. Think what he suffered for us, of his own accord. For he had all power in his hands, and he might have destroyed his persecutors with a word. But he meekly bore it all. He suffered far more than these men did.— But while they were stripping this young man of the clothes worn by the priests, in order to take away his office, his countenance appeared composed and cheerful, and he seemed to be absorbed in prayer and holy meditation. He did every thing they told him to, with perfect readiness. Then the two others came forward, and passed through the same ceremonies. Soon after, two of them, named Henry Voes and John Esch, were led to the stake.

Elizabeth. How did they bear the fire, mother? I should think, after all, when they come to

suffer the pain of burning, they would shrink from it.

Mother. No, my dear; they bore it with cheerfulness and joy. The fire was slow in kindling, and they stood almost naked; but they showed not the least symptom of impatience. But when the fire broke out, there appeared in their countenances a cheerfulness not to be described.— Many persons thought they saw them smile in the fire; and they sung praises to God, till their mouths were stopped by the flames.

Caroline. How could they feel so, mother, while scorched in the fire?

Mother. The Lord was with them, my dear, and made them so happy in their souls, that it overcame the pain of their bodies.

Caroline. Mother, if I am a Christian, will Jesus make me so happy when I die?

Mother. He will, my dear, if you trust in him. I have just heard a story of a little girl not quite four years old, who died not long ago. She had pious parents, who had told her about Jesus; and she had been to the Infant Sabbath School, where she had heard about death, and hell, and about Jesus and heaven. There, she had heard

the teacher tell her about the "Valley of the Shadow of Death." She knew that this meant death; but she thought it was passing through a dark and dismal Valley. But on Monday morning, she was taken with the scarlet fever, and died on Wednesday. On the morning of the day she died, she was told that she would not get well; and she said to her mother, "Mother, I am going through the *Valley of the shadow of death*; I don't want to go alone. Won't you go with me?" "No, my darling," said her mother; "the Lord is not ready to take me yet; I cannot go with you now." This grieved her very much; but she turned to her father and said, "My dear father, won't you go with me, through the Valley of the shadow of death?" But he gave her the same answer that her mother did. Then she was almost broken-hearted, to think that neither her father nor mother would go with her through the dark valley. So she turned away her head to the wall, and cried as if she would break her heart, for fifteen or twenty minutes. Then she turned round, with a sweet smile, and said, "O I have found somebody that will go with me through the Valley of the Shadow of death.—Jesus will go with me." From that time, she

gave bright evidence of faith in Christ, till she died in the sweet expectation of heaven and eternal joy.

Caroline. O, mother, I'll not wait till I am sick and ready to die, before I go to Jesus. Or I will go to him now. I will give him my heart, and love him and serve him and trust in him while I live; and then, when I die, he will go with me through the dark valley of the shadow of death, and be with me in glory forever.

Mother. Yes, my dear; although people sometimes find Jesus on their death-beds; yet, it is a dangerous thing to trust in the prospect of death-bed repentance. Many people die suddenly, without having time to think of their souls.—And generally, when people are sick, they are in such pain, and are so weak that they can't think about God and eternity. But, supposing you could be sure of repenting and coming to Christ, on your death-bed, it would be treating God very ill. It would be saying to him, "I will live for myself, as long as life is worth anything; but just before I die, I will give myself to thee."

Peter. No, mother, I won't be so mean as that. I will give God my best days; and when I come to die, I can die in peace.

Mother. I never heard of any body that was sorry for being religious while young; and I never heard of any one that came to Christ, after he got to be old, or on a death-bed, that was not very sorry he did not come to him before. Remember, my children, every hour you remain in sin, you are making bitter work for yourselves. You are at enmity against God, and every moment increasing, at a fearful rate, your sins. If you ever come to Christ, you will have all this to repent of. The Bible says that sinners are lost. Did you ever get lost, any of you?

Samuel. Yes, mother; when I was going to uncle Joseph's, the first time, I took the wrong road, and went on in it for two hours, before I found I was wrong. Then, I had to turn about and go back just the way I came; and when I got back, I found that I was no nearer uncle's house than I was four hours before.

Mother. Well; just so it is with sinners.—They are lost, and going right away from God; and the longer they go on in this way, the further will they have to come back. But only think, how dreadful to suffer the “vengeance of eternal fire,” with no support from God; but with a sense

of his just displeasure, and the reproach of a guilty conscience.

Peter. O, that is dreadful indeed, mother.

Mother. But it is the portion of all those who do not repent and forsake their sins, and embrace Jesus as their Saviour.

Samuel. Mother, the case of these men is almost exactly like that of the early Christian martyrs, who suffered under the Pagan government of Rome. It seems as if the church of Rome had taken the place of Pagan Rome.

Mother. There is no doubt of it, my son; and here are a few things I wish you, particularly, to notice: 1. The enmity of the natural heart, against the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is the same in all ages, in whatever different forms it may appear. Formerly, Christians were persecuted by the heathen, who had the power in their hands. Now, they were persecuted by men who professed to be Christians, and yet knew nothing of heart religion. 2. You see the evils of the union of church and state, or of religion with the civil government. It necessarily leads to persecution. Before the days of Constantine the Great, *Idolatry* was the established religion of the Roman empire. Of course, Christians must be persecuted.

After the Christian religion was established by law, it soon lost its power over men's hearts. They changed its character, so as to suit it to the depraved feelings of wouldly and wicked men. Then, when true religion was revived, it was met with the same bitter hatred and persecution, which it had before received from Pagan Rome.

3. This case furnishes conclusive evidence, that the spirit of true religion was among the Reformers, and not among the Papists. The former stand in the place of the primitive martyrs; while the latter have stepped into the shoes of the heathen persecutors. 4. Wherever there are general revivals of religion, the same spirit of opposition and persecution will manifest itself, just in proportion to the zeal and holy living of God's people, and the hardness of heart and obstinacy of his enemies. Unconverted men cannot bear to have the claims of God urged upon them; and when they are, they will oppose, and if they have the power, they will persecute those who do so.

Peter. Mother, what became of the other man, who was not led to the stake?

Mother. Luther says he was burned at the stake four days after; but Erasmus says he was taken back to prison, and there privately put to

death. If this is true, it was done to prevent the effect of the public execution upon the people.—His name was Lambert Thorn; and while he was in prison, Luther wrote him a letter, full of encouragement and Christian consolation.

Elizabeth. Did the burning of these holy men do the cause of Papists any good, mother?

Mother. Erasmus says that Brussels had been free from heretics, before this; but, immediately afterwards, many of the inhabitants began to favor Lutheranism.

Samuel. That is always the way with persecution, mother. “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”

Mother. Yes, nothing was ever nearer the truth than that saying. The modest behavior and unshaken fortitude of these sufferers made a great impression upon the public mind. The martyrs were considered innocent, and the judges who had condemned them, unjust and cruel.—But we have had a long talk this evening. It is time for us to retire.

QUESTIONS.

What was the state of the Reformation, after the Diet of Nuremberg? What prevented the enemies of the Reformation, at this critical period, from putting it down? Can you give an account of the persecution of the Queen of Denmark? Can you give an account of the persecution in Flanders, and the martyrdom of Voës and Esch? What effect had this upon the Reformation?

CONVERSATION VI.

Luther's Letter to the Duke of Savoy—Election of Clement VII—
Diet of Nuremberg—Confederacy of Ratisbon—Convention of
Spires—Persecution—Martyrdom of Henry Muller.

Caroline. Mother, I want to hear more about good Martin Luther.

Mother. About this time, a French gentleman informed Luther that Charles, duke of Savoy, was inclined to favor the Reformation.

Elizabeth. The duke of Savoy, mother? I believe he is an old acquaintance. We had a great deal to say about the duke of Savoy, when we were talking about the Waldenses.

Mother. Yes, my dear; and you remember that most of the dukes of Savoy were too moderate in their feelings, to allow the Papists to persecute the poor Waldenses, as they wished.—Luther wrote a letter to the duke, giving him an account of the principles of the Reformation, and exhorting him to promote it in his own dominions.

I will read some parts of this letter, because it shows the true doctrines of the Reformation.— After introducing the subject, he says, “ Our first article is, that we are saved through faith in Christ alone ; who does not blot out our sins on account of our works ; but destroys the power of death. This faith, we say, is the gift of God ; and that it is produced in the heart by the spirit of God. Faith is something that is alive, and produces a change in the whole man. This great truth overturns the whole Popish doctrine of satisfactions and works of merit ; which is truly abominable in the sight of God ; for if sin can be done away, and pardon obtained by our own works, then it is not by the blood of Christ ; and if it is by the blood of Christ, it is not by our own works. To trust in our own works, and seek salvation by them, is in fact to deny the Lord that bought us.”

Elizabeth. Mother, I was talking with Jane Clark, the other day, and she said she was trying to do as well as she could, and she thought if she kept on so, God would have mercy on her, and she should be saved at last. Was not that trusting in her own works ?

Mother. Yes ; as long as she thinks she is

doing as well as she can, and that God will save her on that account, she is trusting in her own works.

Samuel. Well, Mr. Brown says he has never injured any body in his life. He is kind to his neighbors and to the poor; and he does not think God will punish him in hell forever.

Mother. He is trusting in his works; and in order to be saved, he must be perfect. He forgets that he has any duties towards God. He forgets that God, as his Creator and Preserver, has the first claim to his service. If he would be saved by doing well, he must love God with *all his heart*, and his neighbor *as himself*. He knows that he does neither; and when he comes to stand before the bar of God, his own conscience will condemn him.

Caroline. Mother, I was talking with cousin Mary, the other day, and she said she *had a hope*. Then I asked her what made her *have a hope*; and she said because she prayed every morning and evening; and when she heard about heaven and hell, and about God, she always cried. But I told her if praying or crying would save us, there was no need of Christ.

Mother. You were right, my dear. It is im-

possible to tell how many false hopes are built on such foundations. No matter what we do, if we trust in any thing but the sufferings, death, and grace of Christ, to save us, we shall be disappointed at last.

Samuel. Well, mother, what was Luther's second article of faith ?

Mother. He says, "In our second article, we maintain that those who are justified by faith, and whose sins and sinful nature are subdued by Christ, must take care to bring forth good fruit in their lives. By this, we do not mean that these good works make us good. The good fruit does not make the tree good ; but when we see good fruit on a tree, we know that the tree is good.—The works, then, which we exhort men to perform, are such as are of use to mankind, and by no means such as are done with the intention of purchasing heaven for ourselves. This is the ruinous idea, belonging to the Papal system, which is so opposite to pure Christianity." He then goes on to expose a great many abuses of Popery, and concludes his letter by saying, "These, my illustrious prince, are the chief doctrines which I would wish you most strenuously to patronize in public, as you have already begun to do. But let

there be no compulsion ; no resort to the sword. In that way, nothing will prosper. All I request is, that, under your government, those who sincerely preach the Gospel, may be protected, and known to be in no danger. This is the way in which Christ will destroy Anti-Christ by the breath of his mouth."

Samuel. I am glad to hear Luther so distinctly condemn the use of force in religion. I think it shows that the charge of persecution, so often made against the Reformers, did not apply to him.

Peter. Mother, it is a great while since you told us of the death of Adrian ; but you have not told us who was Pope after him.

Mother. Julius de Medicis was elected Pope in November, 1523. He took the name of Clement VII.

Elizabeth. What sort of a man was he, mother ?

Mother. He was much superior to Adrian in the arts of government ; but he was not so good a man. He was elected by unfair means ; and was therefore determined, if possible to prevent the calling of a council, lest they should take away his office. In the latter part of this year, the Diet of Germany met at Nuremberg ; and the Pope

sent Cardinal Campeggio, an able and cunning man, to represent him at the Diet. The Emperor was hindered, by other concerns, from attending this Diet. The Elector Frederic appeared at the beginning of the session ; but he was old and infirm, and he found that there would be much violence and confusion in the proceedings of the Diet, and so he went home before any business of importance was done, and before the Pope's legate had arrived. Campeggio arrived in March, 1524 ; but the princes advised him not to enter Nuremberg with the usual pomp and ceremony ; for lately, while passing through Augsburg, the people had treated him with irreverence, and even ridiculed him in such a manner as to make his own people laugh.

Samuel. I think that shows a great change in the feelings of the people towards Popery.

Mother. Yes, my son ; but it does not show a corresponding advance of true religion ; for the spirit of Christ never manifests itself in such a way. However, there is no doubt that true religion had made great progress.—On the arrival of the legate, Ferdinand, the Emperor's brother, reproached the senate of Nuremberg for their attachment to Lutheranism ; and exhorted them to

adhere to the ancient religious system. But they told him, decidedly, that they must not desert the truth. One of the preachers of that city, was bold enough to declare publicly, in his sermon, that Anti-Christ entered Rome on the very day that the Emperor Constantine left it.

Elizabeth. How durst he preach in that way, mother, when the Popish governors were there.

Mother. I suppose he felt bound to speak the truth, without regard to the consequences. But the legate was greatly offended. Clement was very artful in his endeavors to gain the good will of the German princes. He wrote a very flattering letter to Frederic, in which he did not even name Luther; but requested him to confer with Cardinal Campeggio, for the public good, and to do all he could to compose the disturbances in Germany.

Samuel. But I suppose Frederic was too wise to be deceived by him.

Mother. Yes; he had seen enough before, to know how much dependence to place upon the professions of the Pope. And before he left Nuremberg, he told Feilitch, his representative at the Diet, to have nothing to say to Cardinal Campeggio; and to protest against any concessions which might be made to him, by the Diet. But

Campeggio was very much disappointed, in not finding the Elector at the Diet. In a letter to this prince, he says, "I have been much vexed and mortified to find your highness unexpectedly gone. My master's letters to you are concise.— But he has directed me to tell you, in his name, a great many things, which cannot be delayed, or properly discussed by letter." He then went on, in an artful strain, to praise the wisdom and piety of the Elector, and to abuse the Reformers. This letter, however, with those from the Pope to the Prince, was a piece of downright hypocrisy, designed to deceive Frederic, and bring him into their measures for putting a stop to all Reformation in the church; for Campeggio was instructed to use all his endeavors to have the Edict of Worms carried into effect, to prevent the calling of a general Council.

Samuel. Did the Pope send any answer to the hundred grievances, sent to Rome by the last Diet?

Mother. The Cardinal labored with all his might, both with individual members, and in the public assemblies of the Diet, to effect the objects of his commission. He addressed the Diet in a most plausible strain, about the compassion of

the Pope for the present situation of the country, and his own inclinations to peace and moderation. But he said he was astonished that so many great princes could tolerate the mischievous innovations in religion, which had lately taken place in Germany. But after listening to many unmeaning promises and declarations, the Diet asked him what were the Pope's intentions, respecting the methods they had proposed, at the last Diet, for restoring the peace of the country; and whether he was charged with any satisfactory answer to the memorial of grievances, which they had sent to Rome.

Samuel. I think it would require all his cunning to give a satisfactory answer to these questions.

Mother. In his answer, were united hypocrisy, cunning, and impudence. He said he knew of no plan contrived by them, for composing the religious differences, but the Edict of Worms, which had not been obeyed; and which, in his judgment, ought to claim their earliest attention. As to the memorial of grievances, he acknowledged that three copies of it had found their way to private persons, and he had seen one of them himself; but that the Pope and Cardinals thought it

was the production of some private person, but by no means of the German princes. There were articles in it, he said, which even bordered upon heresy; and the publication of them was highly disrespectful to the Roman See. He had no instructions about it.

Samuel. That was an impudent answer, indeed, mother, I think he would not gain much, by treating the hardy German princes in this way.

Mother. No, my son; though the Emperor was very anxious to gain the Pope to his interests, and therefore, through his brother Ferdinand, warmly seconded the complaints of Campeggio, against the German princes, for their lenity towards Luther; yet, the Papists gained no ground at this Diet. The princes promised to observe the Edict of Worms, *as far as they could.*

Samuel. That was a good way to creep out, mother; for they might very easily say they could not execute it at all.

Mother. Yes; and that might be very true, too; for in the present state of Germany, that Edict could not be executed without producing tumults and civil war.—The Papists did not like it. "These words were inserted," says one of

their writers, "that men might be at full liberty to do nothing in obedience to the Edict of Worms ; and so it actually turned out." The Diet also renewed their demand of a general council, and appointed a new assembly of the States General to be held at Spires, in November of the same year, to make regulations for the settlement of all matters of dispute, till the council could be called.

—The majority of the votes were opposed to the execution of the Edict of Worms in any way. Yet such were the clamors of the prelates, that they carried their points almost by force. The lower orders and states of the Empire protested against these irregular proceedings. The representative of the Elector of Saxony complained that the Edict of Worms was obtained by a manœuvre of the bishops, against the sense of the Diet ; and that it had never been officially made known to him or his brother John. But the important resolution at Nuremberg, which enjoined the preaching of the gospel, was the result of mature deliberation, and had been published every where. His master, he said, could not approve of the present silence, in regard to the danger of attempting to execute the Edict of Worms, and the earnest desire of the princes for the free

propagation of Christian truth ; on which points the former Diet had distinctly explained themselves to Chevegato. But the proceedings of this Diet were not satisfactory to any body. The Emperor, in his letters to his brother Ferdinand and the princes, expressed his utter indignation at what had passed. But as he knew he was unable to make the princes obey his commands, he sent the letters to his brother, telling him not to let the princes see them, if he thought they would treat him with contempt. But Ferdinand was not prudent enough to keep them to himself ; and as the independent spirit of the German princes was not used to such haughty language, they began to resist such encroachments upon their liberties ; and so the Emperor's authority, by this folly, was greatly weakened. The Emperor even abused the Elector of Saxony. In writing to him, he said it belonged to himself and the Pope to call councils and to fix on the place where they should meet. He forbade the princes to meet at Spires, and commanded the strictest observance of the Edict of Worms. He called Luther a **PROFANE SAVAGE**, who, like Mohammed, was aiming at great power by poisoning men's minds by his agreeable doctrines.

Samuel. I think he was mistaken there. The doctrines preached by Luther are just what sinners hate. But what did the good Frederic say to him?

Mother. He remembered the words of Solomon, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." He wrote the Emperor a modest and respectful answer; and sent him a copy of the protest he had made against the decree of the Diet.

Elizabeth. But how were the proceedings of this Diet received at Rome?

Mother. They produced both astonishment and alarm. The Pope was in great fear of the intended assembly at Spire. He immediately called together his Cardinals, to consult about the matter. Campeggio was directed to call together all the princes, bishops, and other great persons in Germany, who were friendly to the church of Rome, and give them fair promises of a future council; but at the same time to represent to them the difficulty of calling one in time of war. He was directed to tell them that their grievances might be redressed at Rome; but to request them, by all means, to prevent, if possible, the discussion of religious matters in the assembly at Spire. Finally, he was to try, through

the influence of the Emperor, to prevent or delay the meeting of that assembly. The Pope also resolved to apply to the kings of England and Portugal for aid; and as he could not gain the virtuous Elector of Saxony to his cause, either by flattery or threats, he thought of degrading him from his office, by declaring him a heretic.

Samuel. Mother, it is distressing to think of the hypocrisy, intrigue, and entire want of principle, which prevailed among those who professed to stand at the head of the church of Christ. But how did Luther himself like the proceedings?

Mother. He was no better satisfied than the Pope and the Emperor. He thought it inconsistent that, while his conduct was to be examined by the assembly of Spires, he was still to be subject to the Edict of Worms. If there was any reason for giving him another hearing, he thought that was sufficient for suspending the sentence by which he was already condemned. As soon as he received a copy of the Edict of this last Diet, he had it printed along with the Edict of Worms, with many severe remarks of his own. During the sitting of the Diet, he wrote a letter to Spalatinus, in which he says, "I wish our simple

princes and bishops would, at length, open their eyes, and see that the present revolution in religion, is not brought about by Luther, who is really nobody; but by the Omnipotence of Christ himself; and may they have grace afforded them to see, also, that they have hitherto done all they could to oppose and resist HIS WILL."

Elizabeth. Well, mother, what did Cardinal Campeggio do, after this?

Mother. Having failed to influence the Diet, as he had hoped, his next object was to secure a determined confederacy of the friends of the Pope. So, in July, 1524, he collected together, at Ratisbon, the Emperor's brother Ferdinand, the two dukes of Bavaria, the arch-bishop of Saltzburg, and several other bishops. These he persuaded to bind themselves by a new declaration, to execute the Edict of Worms, against Luther and his followers; to adhere to the Popish manner of administering the sacrament; to punish the apostate monks and married priests; to bring home from Wittemberg all such students as were their own subjects; to allow no Lutherans, banished from other places, to remain in their dominions; and in case of rebellion, to protect and assist each other with all their force.

Samuel. That was a high-handed movement, mother. What effect did it have upon the cause of the Reformation?

Mother. It was one of those desperate movements, which the blind supporters of a bad cause generally make. If they had seen what was for their good, they would have done all they could to avoid an open division. But the effect of this measure was to bring it about immediately. Those princes who favored the Reformation, were under the necessity of forming a similar union, in their own defence. Accordingly, those members of the Imperial Diet who had disagreed with Cardinal Campeggio, met at Spires in the same month of July, and explained the decrees of Nuremberg in favor of the growing cause of the Reformation. The motives which brought these two conventions together, were directly opposite. The members of the confederacy of Ratisbon, all had some personal object to accomplish. The dignity and authority of the Pope was at stake: it was necessary that he should do something to sustain them. The ambitious schemes of Charles V. made it necessary for him to buy the favor of the Pope, *at any price*. Ferdinand was trying secretly to obtain his elec-

tion, as king of the Romans. The two dukes of Bavaria were bribed into this measure, by one fifth of all the revenues of the higher clergy, in their dominions, for five years; and these clergy were satisfied for this, by being allowed to escape all reform; while several laws were passed, bearing severely upon the inferior clergy.

Elizabeth. O how could men pretend to be acting for the cause of religion, when they were governed by such motives as these?

Mother. Ambitious men soon lose all conscience, and stop at no measures to obtain their own ends.

Samuel. Were the motives of the men that formed the convention at Spire, any better, mother?

Mother. We have no reason to believe that they were all influenced by a regard for true religion, and the interests of Christ's kingdom; yet the motives of none of them appear to have been so low and mean as those of the confederacy at Ratisbon. They were defending their own liberties; and many of them were sincerely desirous of establishing a reformed and pure religion.

Samuel. So it seems the Lord ordered things so as to make the Papists defeat their own ends.

Mother. Yes; this division of Germany into two parties, though in itself a bad thing, was the means of helping the cause of the Reformation. So, you see again, how God can overrule things, in themselves evils to promote his own purposes and glory. About the middle of this year, the Landgrave of Hesse began to profess a decided partiality for the reformed religion. He issued a public proclamation, requiring the preachers in his dominions to confine themselves to the clear and simple doctrines of Christ and his apostles. Upon this, Nicolaus Ferber, a Franciscan monk, put into his hands a book, which he called an approved treatise on religion, and exhorted him to imitate the kings and princes in Italy, France, and Spain, who had agreed to punish the Lutherans. The prince read the monk's book; but told him he found little in it which appeared like the charitable spirit of a true Christian. He said he had no design of changing the ancient customs which were founded in Scripture; but he could not agree with the monk in denying the doctrine of justification by faith, because it was plainly taught in the Bible; and he highly disapproved of his representing

the Virgin Mary as a Mediator between God and man, and the Gospel as a thing that ought not to be preached to the common people.

Samuel. That was a very sensible answer, mother.

Mother. About the same time, the Lord raised up another zealous friend of the Reformation, in Albert, Marquis of Brandenburg. He was at the late Diet at Nuremberg, where he heard one of the Reformers preach. He had before seen and conversed with Luther, and read his books with attention. He now became an open and avowed defender of the Reformation. Prussia, soon after, felt the effects of this change. The pagans of that country had long before been converted, by force, to nominal Christianity. Now, under the protection and encouragement of Albert, a substantial change, both in doctrine and practice, commenced among them, and gained ground very fast. Lutheran ministers labored in Prussia with great success.—George de Polentz, bishop of Samland, distinguished himself in this reformation. He was the first bishop who ventured to recommend to his clergy the study of Luther's writings. In his public advice to his clergy, he laments the ig-

norance of the people ; and exhorts them to perform service in their own language, so that it may be understood.

Elizabeth. That was a great thing for a bishop to do.

Mother. Yes ; but the bishop of Ermland, another province of Prussia, published, in the same month, a most violent and abusive declaration against Luther and his disciples. In this state of affairs, Luther sent into Prussia an excellent minister, named John Brisman. And, a while after, he sent Paul Sperat, who had been confined in the dungeon of Olmutz, for preaching the Gospel in Moravia. He was made bishop of Pomesane, and continued a zealous laborer for about twenty-six years. John Poliander, who had been the clerk of Eckius, at the dispute at Leipsic, was now a zealous Reformer. He went to Prussia, and labored in connection with Brisman and Sperat. With these three faithful ministers, under the direction of the good bishop of Samland, the Reformation made rapid progress in Prussia.—About this time, Luther wrote a long letter to this good bishop, full of good feeling, and correct views.

Samuel. But, mother, I suppose the progress

of the Reformation only made the Papists rage the more, where they had the power.

Mother. Yes; and I will mention a few cases, that you may see their principles and spirit.— Henry Muller had been one of Luther's disciples. He was at the head of the Augustine friars at Antwerp, when he was cast into prison. But some pious women assisted him to escape. He was intending to go to Wittemberg; but he received a pressing invitation from the Senate and people of Bremen, where he went and preached the Gospel for two years. The hearts of the people of this city were well prepared to receive the Gospel; but the Popish clergy were so provoked at the success of his preaching, that they entreated the Senate to send him out of the city.

Elizabeth. I hope they did not do that, after having sent for him.

Mother. No; but when the priests found they could not get rid of him in this way, they complained to the bishop. When Henry heard of this, he drew up the articles of his belief, sent them to the bishop, and declared himself ready to recant any thing which could be proved from Scripture to be heretical. But instead of receiving an answer, he soon after found the

Bull of Leo X. and the Edict of Worms, stuck up on the church door.

Peter. What did that mean, mother ?

Mother. I suppose that was meant to be understood as the sentence of the bishop against him. This took place in the year 1524. About two years after this, he was invited to preach the Gospel at Meldorf, in Ditmarsia. The people of Bremen entreated him not to leave them ; but he thought it his duty to go. He said they had had the Gospel two years at Bremen ; but in the place to which he was called, they had never heard it.

Samuel. Mother, if the ministers in this country were to act from the same principle, would not a great many of them go to the heathen ?

Mother. Yes, my son. The people in this country have heard the Gospel a long time ; while there are hundreds of millions of heathen, who have never heard of Jesus. And if all the pastors in this country were to leave their churches and go to the heathen, we should still be much better supplied than they ; for we have the Bible and a multitude of religious books, and Sabbath Schools all over the country.

Peter. Well, mother, how was Henry received at Meldorf?

Mother. The people received him joyfully. But before he began to preach, Satan stirred up the Papists against him. "What is to be done," said the prior of the monastery, to his clergy. "We shall lose all our authority. We must not do as our friends did at Bremen." So he formed a conspiracy of forty-eight of the principal men of a neighboring town, to murder Henry.

Samuel. O, mother, it makes me shudder to think, that men who profess to be sent of God to preach the Gospel, could set on foot a project to murder a man for preaching the truth, for fear they themselves should lose their authority.

Mother. Yet, my son, this is the spirit of Popery; which teaches that any man who murders a heretic, is doing God service.—But, in the first place, these men sent a letter to the people of Meldorf, threatening to fine them five hundred dollars, if they should suffer Henry to preach.

Elizabeth. I hope they did not mind that, mother?

Mother. No; they treated it with contempt. Henry preached the Gospel, and the people received the truth with wonder, joy, and thankful-

ness. But the prior of the monastery called his monks together, and got the Franciscan monks to help him. Then they went to the magistrates and complained that if Henry was not put to death, the worship of the Virgin Mary and the saints would soon be at an end, and the two monasteries would be pulled down.

Samuel. O how the Papists are frightened at the truth.

Samuel. Yes; Popery cannot stand before that. One of the magistrates said that Henry and those who heard him preach had already been threatened; and offered to have the same repeated. "No, no," said the prior. "If you admonish the heretic in writing, he will answer you, and you will not get the better of him.—Nay, there is danger that you yourselves will be seized with the heretical contagion."

Samuel. What fools they were, mother, to be imposed upon in this way. Only think of magistrates putting a man to death, for fear that he would make them heretics!

Mother. Yes, Popery is full of such absurdities. After this speech of the prior, they all agreed that Henry should be taken and burnt to death in the night.

Elizabeth. And did they not even give him a trial?

Mother. O no ; they were afraid of that. If he had a trial, he would have a chance to defend himself, and convince the people of the truth. So, after it was dark, they collected together about five hundred of the lowest of the people from the villages, and gave them several hogsheads of Hamburg ale.

Elizabeth. O how shocking, mother, that ministers of the Gospel should make people drunk so as to persuade them to commit murder !

Mother. They professed to be ministers of the Gospel ; but they were really the ministers of Satan. And they took the right method to prepare these men to commit any crime. Spirits take away men's reason, and then they can be easily persuaded to do what they would shudder at when sober. Most of the crimes that are committed in this country, are done under the influence of spirits. It is most dangerous to drink any thing that can make a person drunk. It was not ardent spirits, but *beer* that these men drank, and you will see what they did in the end.

Peter. But they drank too much, mother.

Mother. If a person ventures to drink a single drop of any thing that can make people drunk, he is in danger of getting drunk himself. He will have less resolution to resist the temptation to take it the second time, than he had at first ; and when he once gives way to his appetite, there is no telling how far it may carry him. The only safe rule is to DRINK NONE AT ALL, OF ANY THING THAT CAN INTOXICATE.

Caroline. Well, mother, what did they do to Henry ?

Mother. The clergy went forward with lighted torches. About midnight, a body of armed men came to Meldorf, and laid hold of one of Henry's principal supporters, hauled him into street by the hair of his head, and rolled him in the dirt. After this they caught Henry, and dragged him till his feet were cut by the ice, so that he could not walk. One of the magistrates asked him whether he would rather die there, or be sent to the bishop of Bremen. Henry told him, if he had preached any false doctrine, they had him in their power. Then the multitude, who were heated with liquor, cried out " Burn him ! burn him !" So he was condemned to the flames, without even the form of a trial.

Caroline. I think he felt very bad, mother, to be caught so, and burned to death so soon.

Mother. But the Lord supported him, and enabled him to shame the spirit of his persecutors. When he was brought to the pile of wood, he lifted up his hands towards heaven, and said, "Forgive them O Lord, they know not the sin they are committing."

Caroline. O that was like Christ, mother. He prayed so for his murderers.

Mother. Yes, my dear ; and you can judge which had most of the spirit of Christ, this good man or the Popish priests.

Peter. I think they showed more of the spirit of Satan than of Christ.

Mother. Well, the Bible says, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." A good lady of Meldorf was so affected with the sight of his sufferings, that she offered to give the mob five hundred dollars if they would put Henry in prison, and allow him a fair trial. But they instantly trampled her under their feet, and fell upon Henry with clubs, and beat him most unmercifully.

Elizabeth. O what horrid cruelty, mother!

I am glad we live in a land of liberty, where such things cannot be done.

Mother. My dear, our security, under God, has heretofore rested in our being governed by laws, which do not allow any person to suffer punishment until he has had a fair trial; and then he is punished according to law. But if the spirit which has prevailed in our country for some time past, is not checked, we shall all be in danger of suffering in the same way that this good man and this good lady did. Similar mobs have lately undertaken, in many places, in our land, to punish people in the same way. In several instances, men have been hung without any legal trial. In other cases they have been beaten and abused, or their property destroyed. Unless this spirit is speedily checked, we shall have no more security for our lives and property than if we lived under a Popish despotism.

Caroline. Did they burn this good man, mother?

Mother. It was almost two hours, before they could make the fire burn. All this time, they continued to beat him, and to stick sharp pointed instruments into his flesh. At last, they tied

his body to a long ladder, and when he began to pray, they forced his neck with a cord so close to one of the steps of the ladder that the blood gushed out of his mouth and nose.

Samuel. I suppose the priests were afraid to have him speak or pray, for fear the people would hear him, and be convinced of the truth.

Mother. Yes; it is evident that their object was to prevent him from being heard either to speak or pray. They now tried to raise up the ladder, with Henry on it. But, in attempting to support it with a sharp pole, they missed their aim, and he fell upon the sharp point of the pole, which ran through his body and put an end to his sufferings. Then they threw his body into the fire; and one of them snatched a club and beat his breast as long as he could see him breathe.

Peter. Were there any others put to death for their religion, mother?

Mother. Yes; there was no small persecution about this time, in other countries, where the Reformation was spreading. But of this I will tell you some other time. I am now telling you about the Reformation in the countries which were included in the Germanic confederacy. In

Hungary, a bookseller, named George, was put to death, I suppose for selling Luther's books; and at Prague, in Bohemia, a minister was put to death for marrying a wife. At Antwerp, a minister had been in the habit of preaching the Gospel on Sundays, to a great many people. But the government issued an order forbidding it. However, the people met in the ship yards; and as their preacher did not come, a young man placed himself in a boat, near the shore, and spoke to the people in a pious and engaging manner.— But the next day, he was taken and put into a sack and thrown into the river. In general, wherever the Papists had power, they persecuted Christians with great severity, during the years 1523 and 1524.

CONVERSATION VII.

The Anabaptists—their war—Death of the Elector Frederic.

Elizabeth. Mother, what became of the Anabaptists? We have heard nothing of them for a long time.

Mother. You recollect, my dear, that Luther had put Stubner to silence at Wittemberg. But Munzer could not be persuaded to go there. He staid at Alsted, a town belonging to the Elector of Saxony, near Thuringie.

Peter. Did he hold the same opinions as Stubner, mother?

Mother. He said Luther had done more hurt than good; that his doctrine was not spiritual, but carnal. He said divines should obtain the spirit of prophecy, or their doctrines would not be worth a half penny.

Peter. Did he tell them how to get the spirit of prophecy, mother?

Mother. He said they must fast, look grave, talk little, wear plain clothes, and let their beards grow. This was the cross of Christ, he said, and the true mortification. Then they should leave the crowd, think continually of God, and ask him to give them a sign, so that they might certainly know that he loved them, and that Christ died for them. If the sign did not immediately appear, he said they should persevere in prayer, and even argue with him in an angry manner, as though he did not keep his promises.

Elizabeth. O, mother, how could any one dare teach such doctrines as that!

Mother. It is indeed strange that a worm should think of contending with his Maker. But Munzer said this would show their earnestness; and that God would be pleased with it, and give them what they asked. He also maintained that God revealed himself to men by dreams; and that it was chiefly in that way that he answered men's prayers. And if any man had a dream, which could be so interpreted as to be supposed to be a revelation from God, he praised the dreamer, and gained him to his interests. In this way, he got a number of the inhabitants of Alsted to join him; and they bound

themselves by an oath, for the purpose of killing all wicked persons, and appointing new magistrates and princes, so that pious and good people should govern the world. They proposed to level all distinctions among mankind ; to abolish property, and reduce all men to an equality, so that all should receive their living out of one common stock.

Elizabeth. But how is it possible, mother, that he could make people believe it was right for them to murder all the wicked ?

Mother. He told them that the plan was approved by the Almighty ; and that God had assured him, in a dream, of its success ; and as it appealed to the selfishness of the poor, who were greatly oppressed, by the prospect of an equal division of property, many of them were easily gained over to his cause.

Samuel. But it seems strange to me that the princes and rulers should have allowed these things.

Mother. You know the moderation of the Elector ; and how fearful he was of employing force against the prophets, lest he should injure the people of God. And, so long as Munzer confined himself to the interpretation of dreams

and supposed revelations from God, he let him alone. But when he heard of his designs against existing governments, he banished him from his dominions.

Caroline. Where did he go then, mother?

Mother. He first went to Nuremberg; but failing to form a party there, he went to Mulhausen. There he preached to the common people, and persuaded them to put down the old magistrates and choose new ones, and to turn the monks out of doors, and seize their houses and property. Munzer himself took possession of the best and richest houses, and was made the chief magistrate and ruler of the new government, both in civil and religious matters. He decided every matter by the Bible or by pretended revelation. He taught the doctrine of perfect equality, and that the people should have all things common.

Peter. Well, mother, does not our declaration of independence teach that all men are born equal?

Mother. Yes; but it does not mean that they are *in fact* equal; but only that they are equally entitled to certain natural rights, such as the liberty of doing all things lawful, of enjoying the

possession of property, and pursuing happiness. But it does not mean that all men are born equal in regard to natural abilities, wealth, or station in life. This is not true in fact; and the notion is evidently contrary to the intentions of Providence. Some people have, naturally, greater minds than others. There is, in fact, almost as great a diversity of talents among men, as there is of countenances; and so the constitution of human society leads to the same endless variety of circumstances, in regard to wealth and stations in life.

Peter. But the first Christians had all things in common. They sold every thing they had, and put it together into one common stock. Ought we not to do as they did?

Mother. There is an important principle involved in this question, my son; and for want of attending to it, men are often led into error. *We are not required to do every thing that was done by Christ and the Apostles, and other holy men, mentioned in the Bible.* By taking their examples as a perfect rule of conduct, without regard to the difference of circumstances, we shall be led into numerous mistakes. Christ never did any thing wrong; and we are required to

imitate him *in the general spirit of his conduct*. But, as no man ever can be called to act in the same capacity that he did, so no man can be required to do just as he did. The example of Christ is a perfect rule of conduct, just so far as we are placed in exactly similar circumstances, and no farther. The Apostles did not always do right; so that their example can be a perfect rule of conduct, no farther than it is found to agree with the general principles of the Bible. But we are not required in all cases, to follow their example, even when they did right. In order to know our own duty, we must apply the general principles of the Bible to the particular circumstances in which we are placed. But the circumstances in which the apostles were placed, may have required a course of action very different from what is required of us. This is the case, particularly, in respect to their having all things common. Our Savior and the Apostles had all things common, and lived as one family. This was natural, considering the life they led, while traveling from place to place, preaching the Gospel. It would have been strange if they had not done so. It was the most convenient way of living; and it kept them all together, so that the

disciples could all have an opportunity of hearing every thing that Jesus said. But Jesus nowhere commands them to put every thing they have into a common stock ; and it appears that John had some property which he did not put into their common treasury ; for we read that, after the crucifixion, he took the mother of Jesus to *his own home*. If he had not had some private property, he would not have had *a home*.—As the apostles had been accustomed to this way of living, it was perfectly natural that the first converts, in the overflow of grateful feeling and brotherly love, should seek to live in the same way, as one family. But there were peculiar circumstances which rendered it proper at that time, in Jerusalem. It was the time of a great feast, when great numbers of strangers, from all parts of the world, were at Jerusalem. Many of these were converted ; and on that account, probably, deprived of the usual hospitality of their Jewish brethren. There were also multitudes of very poor people, in Jerusalem, many of whom had no doubt embraced Christ. Besides this, those were troublesome times, when the church was exposed to persecution ; and the Christians knew that the temple-worship would be overthrown,

and the Jews scattered all over the world. Under all these circumstances, it was natural that those who had property should throw it into a common stock, to provide for the necessities of all. They felt just as all Christians should feel; *nothing which they had was their own.* Acts 4: 32. And they acted upon the same principle upon which all Christians ought to act; they gave up their property, *when they saw that the interests of Christ's kingdom called for it.* So we should do now. But it does not follow that we should all live as one family, and have no separate property. This was only adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the Christians at Jerusalem. There is no evidence that the same course was pursued in other parts of Judea; and it is evident from the directions which the apostles give in their epistles, about honesty, and the rights of property in general, Rom. 12: 13, 17. 2 Cor. 8: 21, that it was never practised among the Gentile converts; nor even among the Jews that were scattered abroad, as you will see by reading the second chapter of James. If all things had been in common, there would have been no need of exhorting them to take care of the poor.—Young minds are very apt to be

troubled with such questions as this; and on that account, I wish you to get correct principles fixed in your minds, so that you will know how to remove these difficulties. The scheme of living in common, has often been tried, but always failed. It is not adapted to human nature, in its present state; and it is evident that the Lord never designed that we should live so. This doctrine, as preached by Munzer, produced its natural effect: the poor left off work, and supplied their wants from the rich by force. The number of his followers increased wonderfully. Multitudes flocked to his standard. In all the cities which fell into their hands, they put down the magistrates, seized the lands of the nobles, and made them put on the clothes of laborers, so as to make all men equal. But Munzer, their leader, was not capable of conducting this wild undertaking. He had not courage enough to carry it through. He soon collected together eight thousand men; but he suffered himself to be surrounded by a body of soldiers under the command of the Elector of Saxony, the landgrave of Hesse, and the duke of Brunswick. These princes were unwilling to shed the blood of the people; and they sent a young nobleman to the

camp, offering them a free pardon, if they would lay down their arms, and deliver up their leaders. Munzer was alarmed at this, and made a speech, exhorting them not to trust the deceitful promises of their opposers, nor desert the cause of God and Christian liberty. But they saw their danger, and were filled with confusion and terror. However, just at this moment, a rainbow, which was the sign they had painted on their flag, appeared in the clouds, and Munzer cried out with a loud voice, "Behold the sign which God has given. There is the pledge of your safety, and the token that the wicked shall be destroyed." Then the ignorant and superstitious multitude set up a shout, as if victory had been certain. They immediately killed the young man who had been sent to offer them pardon, and demanded to be led against the enemy. But such a rabble was no match for well trained soldiers. The princes, enraged at their barbarity in killing the young nobleman, advanced upon them, and killed five thousand of them. The rest, with their leader, ran away. Munzer was taken the next day, and put to death.

Caroline. Did he die like a martyr, mother ?

Mother. No ; he suffered with a mean, cow-

ardly spirit, because he had not the grace of God to support him.

Samuel. Mother, how could these men raise such tumults, and bring so many people to join them in their wild schemes for reforming the world?

Mother. It is easy to see how this could be, when we consider the condition of the common people, who were called *peasants*. In Germany, all the lands then belonged to the princes and great men, and the peasants were held in a state but very little removed from absolute slavery. They were so grievously oppressed, that, during the latter end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries, they rebelled against their princes in various parts of Germany; and the spirit of discontent among them was very general. The fanatical leaders of the Anabaptists, seized upon this state of feeling among the peasants, to accomplish their objects.

Elizabeth. Did any who had embraced the doctrines of Luther, engage in these tumults?

Mother. In other parts of Germany, the rebellion was of a different character. The peasants, generally, only sought for a redress of their grievances, so that they might enjoy their

rights. But where Luther's doctrines prevailed most, they had removed the servile and superstitious reverence of the people for Popery; but the great mass of the peasants were too ignorant to understand the nature of civil and religious liberty; and but a small portion of the people had, probably, become true Christians at heart. This left them in a condition to be captivated by any thing that promised relief from the oppression under which they groaned. But these tumults can by no means be said to have followed as a necessary consequence of the Reformation.

Samuel. Did Luther do nothing to prevent this, mother? He had so much influence, I should think he might have done something.

Mother. Luther plainly saw that this was an attempt of Satan to hinder the Reformation of Religion which was going on in the land; and as soon as Munzer had made known his wicked designs, so as to leave no room to doubt that he intended to overturn all good government, the Reformer wrote to the Elector Frederic and his brother John, telling them of the danger with which the country was threatened from Munzer and his associates. "My reason," says he, "for

addressing your highness at present, is this : These enthusiasts hold it right to propagate their doctrines by force. They made no secret of this at Wittemberg : and their declaration sunk deep into my mind. I saw, plainly, that they intended to overturn the existing governments, though Christ expressly told Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world. I do therefore most sincerely entreat your highnesses, to employ that authority which God has given you, in preventing the schemes of these seditious persons, who would turn every thing upside down. It is not my wish that any person, no, not even these fanatics, should be hindered from preaching. Let them teach, but keep their hands from violence. Or if they will persist in their ferocious, seditious practices, it will then be your duty to restrain them, and without hesitation, to banish them from your dominions. The warfare of an evangelist is of a spiritual nature. He is to preach and to bear the cross. We nowhere read that either Christ or his apostles pulled down churches or images. But when the divine word penetrated the hearts of men, the heathen churches and images came to nothing. We are to act in the same manner."

Samuel. I am glad to hear that, mother. It shows the true principles upon which Luther acted. He was not for employing force, to make men religious, or prevent them from teaching heresy; but he would not allow men, under pretence of religion, to stir up the people to engage in mobs and riots and rebellion against their rulers.

Mother. After Munzer had been banished, Luther wrote to the magistrates of Mulhausen, warning them not to receive him into their city; and, in the beginning of the year 1525, he published a book against these visionary fanatics. But when he saw that the spirit of tumult and sedition was increasing, he published a very spirited address to all classes of the people. In the first place, he addressed the common people. "I allow," says he, "that those rulers who oppress their subjects, and particularly in preventing the preaching of the Gospel among them, are without excuse. Yet, it is at the peril of losing both soul and body, if you do not preserve a good conscience in this matter. Satan has raised up a number of seditious, sanguinary teachers. I entreat you not to believe every thing you hear. You call yourselves Christians, and

profess to be obedient to the laws of God. In the first place, it is extremely improbable that true Christians should be so numerous as to furnish such large bodies of men as you pretend to have on your side. A true Christian is a scarce bird in the world. Take care that you do not abuse the name of God; for as easily as he drowned the whole world, and rained fire upon Sodom, he can destroy you. Your actions make it very plain to me, that your profession of obedience to the law of God, is a mere pretence. Paul orders all men to obey the magistrate; but you would snatch the sword from him, and resist the power which is ordained of God. The duty of the Christian is, to suffer and to bear the cross, and not to revenge, or take up arms. What appearance is there, of this humble spirit in your conduct? Our Lord forbade Peter to resist; and when nailed to the cross, he patiently committed his cause to the Father, and prayed for his murderers. Do you imitate his example, or pretend not to the character of Christians. You mean to carry your points by force of arms; but you will not succeed." Luther then turns to the princes, and says, "It is to you, rulers, and es-

pecially the rulers of the church, that the present disturbances are to be ascribed. The bishops, to this very moment, even against their better knowledge, persecute the Gospel; and the civil magistrates think of nothing but of draining the wretched poor, to satisfy their own pride and luxury. I have repeatedly warned you of the dreadful evils that await you, but to no purpose. The wrath of God is accumulating over you, and will burst on your heads, if ye repent not. These false prophets, and the rebellion of the common people, are proofs of the divine displeasure. To be plain, such is the state of things, that men neither can nor will, nor indeed should they, bear your government any longer. Listen to the Scriptures, and amend your ways. The people may not succeed at present, and you may kill the greater part of them; but God will raise up others after them. For it is HE himself, who, for your wickedness, brings these troubles upon you. Some of the demands of the people are so reasonable, that you ought to be ashamed for having reduced your subjects to the necessity of making them. It is the duty of governments not to vex and distress their subjects, but to be the

guardians of their fortunes and comforts ; but the oppression of the poor peasants of this country, has become intolerable.”

Peter. He was very bold, mother, and plain, to both parties.

Mother. Yes ; he spared neither. In conclusion, he exhorted them not to think of fighting one another ; but to settle their disputes in a peaceable way, for the advantage of both parties.—This address shows the spirit of Luther ; and proves that he was in no way connected with the tumults that disturbed the country. They owed their origin entirely to the cruel oppression of the rulers. But the general feeling of discontent that prevailed among the people, was made use of, by these wicked prophets, for promoting their cause, and establishing their authority.

Peter. Well, mother, when Munzer was killed, did that put an end to the Anabaptists ?

Mother. It put an end to the insurrection of the peasants, for that time. But still, there were many persons who held the doctrines of the Anabaptists, in secret, ready to embrace the first opportunity to put them in practice. In those provinces of Upper Germany, where they had

already raised tumults, the magistrates watched them so closely, that they had no opportunity of exciting disturbance. But in the Netherlands and Westphalia, where they were less known, they got into several towns, and spread their pernicious principles. In the year 1534, two Anabaptist prophets, John Matthias, a baker of Haerlem, and John Boecold, a journeyman tailor, of Leyden, settled at Munster. Caroline, can you find Munster on the map ?

Caroline. Yes, mother, here it is, in the Upper part of Westphalia.

Mother. Yes; and it was the capital city of a province of the same name. It was subject to the bishop; but was governed by its own senate and consuls.—Both these men possessed the necessary talents for desperate enterprises. They had great resolution, the appearance of sanctity, and a confident and plausible manner of addressing the people. They also made bold pretensions to inspiration. Considering the unsettled state of men's minds, on the subject of religion, and the grievous oppressions under which they had long groaned, it is not surprising, that they soon gained many converts. Among these, were a minister of the name of Rothman, who had first

preached the doctrines of the Reformation at Munster, and Cnipperdoling, a rich man, of some rank in society.

Elizabeth. It is very strange, mother, that a minister who had embraced the Reformation, should have joined them.

Mother. No, my dear, it is not strange ; for the true principles of the Christian religion were but imperfectly understood, even by many of the Reformers themselves ; and there is no doubt that many zealously embraced the Reformation, because they saw the corruptions of Popery, without having any very distinct notions of what was to take its place ; and without experiencing the renewing power of the Gospel in their own hearts. Such persons would be ready to embrace any thing new, and to be turned about by every wind.—However, the conversion of such persons emboldened them still more. They taught their opinions publicly, and made several attempts to become the masters of the town. At last, having secretly called in their associates from the neighboring country, they took possession of the arsenal and senate house, in the night. Then running through the streets with drawn swords, and hor-

rible howlings, they cried out, "Repent and be baptised!" and "Depart, ye ungodly!"

Samuel. Where were the rulers, all this time?

Mother. The senators, nobility, and citizens generally, were so frightened with their threats and outcries that they ran away in confusion, and left the city to the frantic multitude, who were chiefly strangers. As there was now nothing in their way, they set about forming a government according to their own wild ideas. At first, they elected senators of their own sect, and appointed Cnipperdoling and another man consuls. But this was mere form, for all their proceedings were directed by Matthias. He gave his commands in the style and with the authority of a prophet; and it was instant death to disobey him.

Elizabeth. Strange that the people should pacify themselves with the name of liberty, while they submitted to such tyranny as that.

Mother. But there is no absurdity too great for men to embrace, if they can only be persuaded that it comes from divine authority.—The prophet began with encouraging the multitude

to rob the churches, and tear down their ornaments. Then he told them to destroy all books but the Bible, as useless or impious.

Samuel. That is like the Mohammedans, mother.

Mother. Yes ; and the peculiar principles which distinguished this sect were more like those of the Mohammedans than of any others. Matthias ordered the land and property of those who had left the city, to be sold to the people in the country around ; and commanded all the people to bring their money and property to him. The whole of this he placed in a public treasury, and appointed deacons to distribute it for the benefit of all. Having reduced the people all to an equality, according to the notions of the sect, he made them all eat at public tables, and gave orders what dishes should be served up each day. His next care was to provide for the defence of the city. He collected large stores of arms. He repaired the fortifications of the city, obliging every one, without distinction, to work in his turn. He formed such as were able to bear arms, into a standing army. He also sent persons into other parts of Germany, inviting the Anabaptists to assemble at Munster,

which he called Mount Zion, that they might set out from there to bring all the nations of the earth to submit to their authority.

Samuel. How is it possible that he could bring the people into such ridiculous measures?

Mother. We have already seen, in the history of Mohammed, how easy it is for a successful impostor, to bring his followers to submit implicitly to his will. The history of the Anabaptists furnishes another instance; and Matthias accomplished his design much in the same way as Mohammed. He kept up the excitement in their minds by exhortations, revelations, and prophecies, as well as by his own example, so that they seemed ready to suffer any hardships, in order to maintain their opinions.

Peter. Mother, why did not the government send an army to punish the rebels?

Mother. The bishop of Munster raised an army and besieged the town. As he came towards the city, Matthias, at the head of some chosen men, went out, and in a furious manner attacked the bishop's army; and after killing a great many men, he returned to the city, loaded with spoil. But he was so much intoxicated with his success, that the next day he brandished

his spear, and declared that he would go out like Gideon, with a handful of men, and smite the host of the ungodly. Accordingly, he chose thirty men, who followed him without hesitation. They rushed madly upon the enemy ; but every man of them was killed.

Peter. And the prophet too, mother ? I suppose that put an end to the war, then.

Mother. No, my son ; the death of Matthias, at first, produced great terror among his followers. But Boccold took his place, and soon gained so much credit among the people, that he succeeded Matthias in the absolute direction of their affairs. However, he did not attempt to march out against the enemy, as Matthias had done ; but contented himself with defending the city. But he was wilder in his enthusiasm than Matthias. Soon after the death of that prophet, he stripped himself naked, and marching through the streets, proclaimed with a loud voice, "The kingdom of Zion is at hand : whatever is highest on earth shall be brought low, and whatever is lowest shall be exalted." In order to fulfil this, he commanded that the churches, which were the highest buildings in the city, should be leveled to the ground. Then he put out of office

the senators chosen by Matthias; and changed Cnipperdoling from the highest office to the lowest, and made him the common hangman.

Samuel. I should think they would have resisted such arbitrary proceedings.

Mother. When fanaticism once gets possession of men's minds, it will carry them wherever their leaders choose to have them go. They supposed him to be directed by God himself; and of course, to hesitate to obey him, would be, in their view, rebellion against the Almighty. Cnipperdoling not only agreed to this change without murmuring, but with joy; though he was called almost every day to take the lives of those who had offended the prophet. In place of the senators, Boccold appointed twelve judges, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, reserving to himself the same authority which Moses had among the Israelites. But this did not satisfy him. He persuaded another man, who was acknowledged as a prophet, to call the multitude together and declare that it was the will of God, that John Boccold should be king of Sion, and sit on the throne of David. When this was done, John kneeled down and accepted the heavenly call, declaring that the same thing had been re-

vealed to himself. The deluded multitude immediately acknowledged him as their king; and a crown of gold was put upon his head, and he was clothed in the richest garments. He carried a Bible in one hand, and a naked sword in the other.

Samuel. How strange, mother, that he should carry in his hand the very book in which his conduct was condemned, in the most pointed manner.

Mother. 'The worst things that ever happened, have been done in the name of God and religion. —But John went on, carrying out his system of royalty. A great body of guards accompanied him, whenever he appeared in public. He coined money, stamped with his own image, and appointed the great officers of his kingdom. Cnip-perdoling was made governor of the city, as a reward for his former submission. But now, as Boccold had got to the height of power, he began to show a disposition to gratify himself in another way. He told his prophets to address the people upon the lawfulness and necessity of taking more than one wife. This, they said, was one of the privileges which God had granted to the saints. When the minds of the people were sufficiently

prepared for it, he set them the example, by marrying three wives, one of whom was the widow of Matthias, a very beautiful woman. He afterwards added to the number of his wives, till he had taken fourteen. But the widow of Matthias was made queen, and shared with him the splendors of royalty. The people followed his example. No man contented himself with one wife. Not to use their Christian liberty was considered a crime. Persons were appointed to search the houses for young women; and every one that was found, was forced to marry. Besides this, men were allowed to put away their wives, whenever they pleased. Thus, every excess was committed, of which the passions of men are capable, when restrained neither by the authority of law, nor a sense of decency; and all this was done in the name of religion. At the same time, similar scenes of violence, tumult, and sedition, were exhibited in Holland. King John pretended that God had made him a present of the cities of Amsterdam, Deventer, and Wesel. So he sent men there to preach to the people. About the beginning of the year 1535, twelve Anabaptists, of whom five were women, met at Amsterdam, in a private house, at midnight. One of them, a tailor

by profession, fell into a sort of trance: and after having preached and prayed for four hours, he stripped himself entirely naked, threw his clothes in the fire, and commanded the rest, in the name of God, to do the same. They all immediately obeyed him; and then they all followed him, through the streets, bawling out, "*Wo, wo! the wrath of God! the wrath of God! wo to Babylon!*"

Elizabeth. Did they do this in the name of God, too?

Mother. Yes; and this shows the danger of giving way to enthusiastic notions, and pretended inspirations. When men are fully persuaded that they are guided by a divine impulse, there is no absurdity or abomination too great for them to practise. These fanatics were taken before the magistrates, and clothes were offered them to cover their nakedness; but they would not put them on; but cried out, "*We are the naked truth.*"

Caroline. What was done with them, mother?

Mother. They were put to death. But when led to the scaffold, they sung and danced, with enthusiastic frenzy. Soon after this, a man of

the name of *Van Geelen*, who had been sent to that city by the "King of Zion," as Boccold called himself, marched a band of his followers to the town-house, for the purpose of taking possession of the city. But they were surrounded by the city authorities with some soldiers, and after a severe battle, he and his company were put to death.

Samuel. But what were the princes of Germany doing, all this time?

Mother. The bishop of Munster had kept up the seige; and the princes of Germany met together, and voted to supply him with men and money for putting down the Anabaptists. They were now reduced almost to a state of famine; and several small bodies of their brethren, who had come to their assistance, were killed. Yet, their hopes were as high as ever; and the prophet succeeded in making them believe that God would, in a miraculous manner, deliver the city. The faith of a few began to be shaken; but they were immediately punished with death, for distrusting the power of God. One of the king's wives said something, which showed some doubt about his divine mission; and he instantly called

them all together, and commanded the blasphemer, as he called her, to kneel down, and then cut off her head with his own hands.

Elizabeth. O mother, did not this strike the rest of them with horror ?

Mother. No ; they joined him in dancing with joy around her bleeding corpse.—But, at length, the city was taken, and most of the people killed. The king was loaded with chains, and carried from city to city, to gratify the curiosity of the people.

Peter. How did he bear that, mother ?

Mother. His spirit was not broken nor humbled by it ; and he clung to the opinions of his sect to the last. He was finally taken back to Munster, and put to death, with lingering and painful tortures, which he bore with great fortitude.—This extraordinary man, who had been able to acquire such amazing power over the minds of men, was only twenty-six years old.

Elizabeth. He must have been a wonderful man, mother, or he could not have deceived the people so, at such an age.

Mother. The history of the Anabaptists is full of instruction. You see by it, how fond peo-

ple are of any thing that is marvellous. 'This is especially so among such ignorant and superstitious people as the German peasants. But, it is by no means confined to such. Even in our own country, where intelligence is so generally diffused, there is a wonderful disposition to run after pretended prophets. If it were not so, the delusions of the Shakers and the Mormonites, and others of the same class, could never have gained a footing here ; and the Quakers, who believe themselves to be all inspired, would not be so generally esteemed as a Christian people.

Samuel. Why, mother, I have always heard the Quakers spoken of as a good Christian people.

Mother. I know they are so spoken of, my son ; but I wish here to give you all a solemn warning against the distinguishing doctrine of of that sect, because it is so bewitching and plausible to minds not established in the truth ; and yet, I do not hesitate to pronounce it a soul-destroying error.

Peter. What is it, mother ?

Mother. They hold that every man has within him a principle, which they call *inward light*,

and which they say is sufficient to guide us in every thing. This principle, they hold, is our *only rule of faith and practice*.

Caroline. I thought the Bible was the only rule of faith and practice, mother.

Mother. It is, my dear; but they put this inward principle above the Bible. They call it inspiration; and so, having, as they suppose, the same Spirit which dictated the Bible, they claim the right of fixing the meaning of the Scriptures. In this way they fritter away every thing in the Bible, which does not favor their own notions. To adopt this sentiment, is to forsake the sure guide of divine revelation, and follow the light of reason and natural conscience; which is like exchanging the glorious light of the sun for the faint beams of a glimmering taper.

Samuel. But, mother, they do not call it reason. They think that God designed to make miraculous gifts and inspiration permanent in the church; and that this inward principle is nothing less than the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. I have been very much perplexed to understand a great many of the promises of Christ, upon any other ground than that these gifts were to continue.

Mother. This is a difficulty common to young minds. But it arises from a want of discrimination. In the first place, there is an error in supposing that the office of the Apostles was to be permanent in the church. This is the grand error of the church of Rome, which has led to all the abominations arising from the supremacy of the Pope; and which has been adopted, with some modification, by all those denominations, who hold to different orders of clergy, leading to the establishment of an hierarchy and spiritual tyranny. The office of the Apostles was *special*. They were commissioned, and clothed with miraculous gifts, for the express purpose of bringing in and establishing the new dispensation of the Gospel. Now, if you bear this in mind, you will find no difficulty in understanding those promises of Christ, which have so often been brought forward by enthusiasts, to prove that miraculous gifts were to continue in the church. You will see that they were given expressly to the Apostles, when Christ was giving them directions respecting their commission; and *that they were not intended for Christians generally.*

Samuel. Still I have some difficulty in prov-

ing that miraculous gifts were to cease with the apostolic age ; and I have sometimes been almost ready to conclude that it is only for want of faith in the church, that we do not have them now.

Mother. Well, my son, I will mention a few considerations, which, I think, will satisfy your mind on this subject. The design of the miraculous influences of the Holy Spirit, was, to reveal to man the will of God, and to establish the authority of that revelation. In order to reveal the truths necessary for man to know, men were inspired by the Holy Spirit, in such a manner that what they wrote came from God. And, in order to prove that they were divinely inspired, God gave them the power of working miracles and showing signs to the people. Again, as the Apostles were commissioned to establish the Christian religion, in the midst of unbelief, and the opposing influences of a wicked world, they were clothed with the power of working miracles, to prove the truth of the facts and doctrines which they preached ; and with the power of speaking many languages, to enable them rapidly to make known the Gospel message, throughout the world. When this was done, miraculous

gifts were no longer necessary. Their design was accomplished.

Samuel. But if ministers could now speak by inspiration, and prove their doctrines by miracles, would not men be more likely to believe and embrace the gospel?

Mother. I have no reason to believe they would. In Christ's parable of the rich man and Lazarus, when the rich man begged Abraham to send Lazarus to preach to his brethren, Abraham is represented as saying, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they hear, though one rose from the dead." And what multitudes saw the miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles, and yet believed not. The reason why men do not embrace the Gospel, is not that they are not rationally convinced of its truth, but that their hearts are opposed to it. If men loved the truths of the Bible, there would be no infidels; for the evidence of the truth of that blessed book is overwhelming. A constant succession of miracles could not make it more so.

Samuel. But Christ promised the Apostles that the Comforter should abide with the church.

forever. If the Holy Spirit were present at this day, as he was on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand were converted, would there not be more power in the church?

Mother. My son, it was not a miracle that converted the three thousand, on the day of Pentecost. It was the influence of the Holy Spirit *upon the heart*, turning it to God; and that influence is still felt in the church, and will be to the end of the world. In Revivals of Religion, it is exerted upon multitudes, in the same way that it was on the day of Pentecost.

Elizabeth. The promise of Christ, then, that the Comforter should abide with us, is still fulfilled?

Mother. Yes; and this influence, which is continued in the Church, is an infinitely greater blessing than the one which is discontinued. Without it, the church could not exist—without it, no one would embrace the Gospel—without it, *none would be saved*. But the other has answered its end, and is therefore no more needed. God has revealed all that it is necessary for man to know, in his Holy Word. It is therefore no longer necessary that ministers should be inspired. Indeed, the Scriptures are a better rule

than the inspiration of ministers would be ; and it is evident, from the whole tenor of the Scriptures, that God intended his written word to be our "*only rule of faith and practice ;*" and that he did not intend to continue to reveal it over again to every generation of his people. The Apostle Jude exhorts Christians to "contend earnestly for the faith *once* delivered to the saints ;"* thus intimating that it would not be *again* revealed. What sense could there be in this passage, if the same faith were to be delivered anew to every Christian ? Our Savior expressly declares that he came not to destroy the law and the prophets ; and he constantly appeals to the Scriptures, to settle all matters of dispute, although he was himself greater than the prophets. The Bereans are commended, as more noble than other converts, because they "searched the Scriptures daily," to see whether the things preached by the Apostles were true. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of those who should undertake to lead the people, says, "To the law and to the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them ;"† and the Apostle Peter, after

* Jude 3.

† Isa. 3 : 20.

alluding to the glorious vision which he saw, at the transfiguration of Christ, says, "We have also a *more sure* word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place."* This is directly in point. It shows that the apostle himself, who was inspired, and who had seen visions of glory, yet esteemed the written word as a sure guide.

Samuel. But I don't quite understand, mother, how the written word could be a surer guide than present revelation.

Mother. It is *permanent*. It does not appear, for a little while, like a vision, and then vanish away. We have it continually with us. *It is also certain.* The writers of the Scriptures had things revealed to them in such a manner that there could be no mistake. But at the same time ~~there~~ were false prophets, who taught the people lies. And so if the gift of prophecy were permanent in the Church, Satan would no doubt take advantage of it, to deceive multitudes with false visions and inspirations. But he cannot change the written word of God.

Peter. But, mother, it is so difficult to understand the Bible, and there are so many opinions

* 2 Pet. 1: 19.

about its meaning, that one don't know what to believe.

Mother. My son, the great truths that are necessary to salvation are so plain that a little child can understand them. The reason that many people find it so difficult to understand the Bible, is, that they do not relish the truth, but set themselves to quarreling with it, and trying to make the Bible say what it does not. Such people would find the same difficulties with immediate revelation from God. They would relish it no better ; and if it were accompanied with miracles, they would not believe it, unless their hearts were changed by the Holy Spirit. But if any person will come to the Bible with the simple confidence of a child, determined to believe just what it teaches, these difficulties will vanish. If I have proved, as I think I have, that the Scriptures were intended to be our "only rule of faith and practice," it will follow, of course, that, after these were completed, there would be no need of any further revelation of the will of God. Then we might expect that, when all that was necessary had been revealed, the Scriptures would be closed and sealed up. And I think I can show that this was done. We have an express intima-

tion of this, in the prophecy of Daniel. The angel told him that the Lord had appointed seventy weeks from the time that the commandment went forth to rebuild the temple, to bring in and establish the Gospel dispensation.

Samuel. But, mother, it was more than seventy weeks from that time to the coming of Christ.

Mother. You will recollect that the Jews were taught to observe a week of years; and that often the Lord, in speaking to them, put a day for a year.* This prophecy of Daniel is generally understood, by learned men, as meaning seventy weeks of years; which would be four hundred and ninety years; and this time is generally understood to extend to the establishment of the gospel dispensation, and the overturning of the temple worship; or to the close of the apostolic age. Elizabeth, you may read the passage in Daniel.

Elizabeth. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to SEAL

* Num. 14: 3, 4. Ezek. 4: 6. Lev. 25: 1-7.

UP THE VISION AND PROPHECY, and to anoint the Most Holy." Dan. 9: 24.

Mother. Here you see one of the things to be done in this period, was, to *seal up the vision and prophecy.*

Caroline. What does that mean, mother.?

Mother. The prophecies of the Old Testament all pointed forward to the coming of Christ. When he came, they were fulfilled; and when the Scriptures were completed, and all was revealed that was necessary for us to know, the revelation was closed, as we seal up a letter that is finished. Now let us see if we can find any evidence that the Scriptures were thus sealed up. In the first place, we will look at the close of the Old Testament. For, when all had been revealed that was necessary to be known before the coming of Christ, the Old Testament was sealed up, and there was no more revelation till the coming of John the Baptist, who ushered in the new dispensation. In the last chapter of Malachi, the Lord directs the children of Israel to observe the Law of Moses; and then immediately tells them that he will send them Elijah the prophet, to prepare the way for the coming of the

Messiah ; thus intimating that they were not to expect any farther revelation, until the appearing of the forerunner of the new dispensation ; and this is true, for no prophet came, and no vision was seen, from that time till the angel appeared to Zacharias, to announce the birth of John the Baptist. It is generally understood that the book of Revelation was written last of all the books of the New Testament. Let us see if we can find any thing in the close of this book, like what we have noticed in Malachi. The Lord Jesus utters a solemn and awful warning against any man that shall presume to add to the prophecy of this book, or take from it ; and then immediately after refers to his second coming ; as though no more revelation was to be expected till that event.*

Samuel. But was not that solemn warning spoken particularly with reference to the book of Revelation ?

Mother. Yes ; I have no doubt that it has a special reference to that book ; but taken in connection with the fact that it was the last book of the Bible, and with the intimation which appears to be contained in it, of the sealing up of Revelation, I think it was also intended to apply to the

* Rev. 22 : 18—21.

whole Bible; and to contain an awful warning to any person who should, before the last coming of Christ, presume to appear in the character of a prophet, and add to the truth already revealed, or take from it. And as there is no evidence that any prophet has since appeared, who could prove his inspiration by miracles, I think we have conclusive proof that the miraculous influences of the Holy Spirit were never designed to continue beyond the apostolic age. There is certainly a very marked resemblance between the sealing up of the canon of the Old and New Testaments; and also, a striking resemblance in the facts that followed; as miraculous gifts did, in both instances, cease with the last inspired writer. And as no vision was again seen, until the time mentioned in the conclusion of the Old Testament; so we may not expect any farther vision to appear till the time mentioned in the sealing up of the New Testament. The first time mentioned was the first appearing of the Messiah; the second time, is his second coming, with power and great glory, to judge the world.

Samuel. I am satisfied now. Your arguments have cleared up some difficulties, which have troubled me very much. But my mind is not

quite clear yet, as to the kind of divine influence which we are to expect in this age. The apostle Paul says, "As many as are *led by the Spirit of God*, they are the sons of God."* What does this mean, if not, that the Spirit of God is to be our guide?

Mother. It is true that the Spirit of God is to be our guide. Christians are led by the Spirit; but not by *direct impulse*, independent of the truth. The Holy Spirit is the author of the Scriptures; and his influences, in the conversion and sanctification of his people, are spoken of *in connection with the truth*. "Of his own will begat he us, *with the word of truth*." "Seeing ye have purified your souls, in *obeying the truth, through the Spirit*." "Sanctify them *through thy truth*: **THY WORD IS TRUTH**."† Here, it is all-important that you should not mistake; for I have no doubt that even many Christians have become a prey to the Adversary, and run into wild extravagances, in consequence of adopting an erroneous opinion upon this point. The office of the Holy Spirit, in the present age of the church, is not to *reveal any new truth*, but to *apply* the truth already revealed, and to *incline the*

* Rom. 8: 14. † Jam. 1: 18. Pet. 1: 22. John 17: 17.

hearts of men to obey it. And his operations cannot be sensibly felt, separate from the exercises of our own minds. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth." This is the description which our Savior has given, of the operations of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of men. We cannot see the wind; but we can see its *effects*: we can see the trees move and the clouds fly before it. So, we cannot tell how it is, that the Spirit operates upon our minds, so as to produce holy desires and feelings. But when we have these desires and feelings, we know they are produced by the Spirit of God, because he has taught us in his Holy Word, that there is no good in us by nature, and that every good emotion is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost.

Samuel. But are not the feelings produced by the Holy Spirit so different from all other feelings that I can certainly know that he is the author of them?

Mother. They are not different *in themselves*. For example, the emotions of *joy* and *sorrow* are the same, whether true or false; but they are excited by different objects. A person who has

been for some time in great distress of mind, arising from the fear of hell, may suddenly become very joyful, from the belief that his sins are pardoned ; and yet this belief may have no rational foundation. Multitudes have doubtless settled down upon false hopes, in this way. And their feelings, both of joy and sorrow, are the same in their *nature*, as those that are genuine ; and as simple *emotions*, the one cannot be distinguished from the other.

Samuel. How then can I tell whether my feelings are right or wrong ?

Mother. You can only tell by their *character* ; and you can only determine their character, by comparing them with the word of God. All feeling produced by the spirit of God, will agree with his word ; for “ *he cannot deny himself.* ” — Godly sorrow, which is the genuine fruit of the Spirit, will flow from a sense of sin ; and “ joy in the Holy Ghost,” arises less from the prospect of escaping punishment, than from that of deliverance from the bondage of sin, and a contemplation of the glorious perfections of God, as they are displayed in the great work of redemption. When we *rejoice in God*, contemplated as a sovereign, in whom are united *Holiness, Justice,*

Goodness, and Truth, then we may be sure that our joy is produced by the Holy Spirit. And so, we may judge of every class of emotions, and determine whether they are spiritual or not, by comparing them with the word of God.

Samuel. Well, mother, if I have a strong impression upon my mind, that I ought to do a certain thing, and I cannot get rid of it, but it follows me all the time, day after day, does not that come from the Spirit of God? And is it not my duty to obey the impulse?

Mother. It is not certain that it is your duty to do any thing, because you have a strong impression that you ought to do it. This impression may come from the Spirit of God, or it may come from Satan.

Samuel. But how shall I know from whom it comes?

Mother. If it is any thing which the Scriptures, taken in connection with the providence of God and your present circumstances, clearly point out as a thing which you ought to do, you may safely conclude that the impression upon your mind, arises from the Spirit of God, stirring up your conscience to a sense of duty. But, if you conclude that it is your duty to do any thing,

because you have a strong impression that you ought to do it, you bring in a new rule of action; and there is no end to the extravagances to which it will lead. This is the very starting point of enthusiasm. If you trace up all the wild fire and extravagance that has ever afflicted the church, you will find that it has originated here. You see an example of this, in the case of the Anabaptists. At first they professed to have the spirit of prophecy, and to be led by the Holy Ghost; and there was so much sincerity and sanctity in their appearance, that the learned Melancthon, and even the cautious Frederic, came very near being deceived by them. But their supposed revelation led them to adopt a false guide; and they soon showed themselves to be a set of visionary enthusiasts. Then, their wicked and malignant passions, united with their enthusiastic spirit, converted them into furies. This is the origin of *Fanaticism*. And now, I wish deeply to impress upon your hearts this sentiment:—
THERE IS NO SAFETY IN DEPARTING FROM THE SIMPLE MEANING OF THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD. If you take this for your standard of right and wrong, and form all your opinions from it, and

make it the guide of all your conduct, there is no danger of your going astray.

Elizabeth. But is there not danger of our mistaking its meaning?

Mother. There is very little danger of your mistaking its meaning, on any essential point, provided you come to the study of it with a right spirit. If you form your opinions first, and then go to the Bible to prove them, you will be sure to err; *you will make it mean just what you wish to have it.* But, if you come to it with an humble, teachable spirit, ready to bow your will to the will of God, and to believe just what he has taught, without asking a reason for his conduct, you will find, in general, a very plain book, and easy to be understood.

Peter. Mother, the Apostle Peter says there are many things in the writings of Paul, which are hard to be understood.

Mother. Yes, my son, there are many doctrines taught in the Bible, which it is hard for us fully to comprehend, in all their bearings; but, upon the great truths of religion, it is generally easy to understand what the sacred writers mean, and to see that they teach certain facts and doc-

trines. And we may believe these doctrines and facts, without understanding *why* they should be true, or *how* they exist. It is for us to believe them, because God has revealed them, without inquiring into the reason and the mode of their existence.

Samuel. But, is there not sometimes a *hidden* meaning to the Bible.

Mother. No farther than that there may be prophecies which cannot be fully understood till they are fulfilled, or truths which cannot be realized till they are experienced. This is true of every thing that relates to the *new birth*.—There is nothing mystical about it. The truths revealed respecting this great moral change, are as plain as language can make them; and yet, their full meaning cannot be comprehended till they are experienced in the soul. But nothing has, perhaps, done more mischief to the Church than the attempts which have been made to *spiritualize* the word of God, and fix upon it a mystical signification, which does not appear on the face of it.

Elizabeth. Well, I suppose the defeat of the Anabaptists, at Munster, put an end to the sect.

Mother. It is but justice to mention that the

whole body of this sect, were not chargeable with these seditious proceedings. Dr. Mosheim says of them, "It would betray ignorance or want of candor, to deny that there were, every where, persons who held, in general, to the same opinions, and yet lived more peaceably; in whom no fault can be found except their erroneous opinions, and their zeal to spread them. Nor do I fear to add, that, among the followers, not only of these more sober Anabaptists, but even those altogether misguided, there were many persons of honest intentions, and of *real piety*, whom an unsuspecting simplicity, and a laudable desire to reform the church, had led to join the party." Whether the class referred to here, held the opinions which led to the fanatical proceedings already mentioned, it is not easy to determine. But it is not unlikely that there might be many, who abhorred these mischievous doctrines, but were involved in the general odium which these measures brought upon the sect. It is no uncommon thing, in times of such excitement, for all who hold a single prominent sentiment in common, to be charged with all the errors and crimes, which may be held and practised by individuals who hold the common sentiment. This is the gross-

est injustice; and yet, men of the world, as rulers generally are, as well as the great mass of the people, are unable to discriminate in such matters; and so are ever ready to condemn the innocent with the guilty. This appears to have been the case with the Anabaptists. The violent and rebellious spirit of the fanatical portion of them brought a general and bloody persecution upon all who held the common sentiment in regard to baptism. It is said that no less than *one hundred thousand* perished in this persecution. Very many of these were put to death for holding and teaching opinions calculated to overturn all governments, and civil institutions, and for carrying out these opinions in acts of rebellion. These suffered justly, being guilty of *treason*, which is a capital crime in all governments. But it is also true that many Anabaptists were put to death, not as being bad citizens, but for holding that adults only ought to be baptized.

Samuel. How strange it is, mother, that any government should put to death good citizens, for so slight a cause as that.

Mother. It was for conscience' sake; and it is very probable that many sincere Christians suffered by it. Yet, when we consider the state of

the European governments at that time, together with the odium which was attached to the name of *Anabaptists*, on account of the tumults raised by a portion of them, it is not strange that all who bore the name, should be punished as disturbers of the peace. But a great change took place in the affairs of this sect about the year 1537. A popish priest, of the name of *Menno*, joined them, and was the means of changing their character, and greatly increasing their numbers. He was priest of a church in Pinningen, in Friesland. His rector had some learning; with another clergymen under him, he had some knowledge of the Scriptures. But Menno would never read them, for fear they would mislead him.

Samuel. O how Popery degrades the minds of men. What a little mind a man must have, to be afraid to examine any thing, from the fear of having his opinions changed.

Mother. Yes; such is the abject slavery in which Popery holds the minds of men. But, although Menno was afraid of reading the Bible, he was not afraid of spending his time with other priests, in drinking and gambling. But, one time, as he was reading mass, he says a doubt came across his mind, whether it could be the

real body and blood of Christ. At first, he supposed it was the suggestion of the devil ; and he confessed it, and prayed, but could not get rid of it. But, at length, he began to read the New Testament, and soon found that he had been deceived. He went on examining the Scriptures, till he became an evangelical preacher, and the people began to love him. But, at this time, he heard that a man had been put to death, because he had been baptized. He was, at first, surprised to learn that a man had been baptized the second time. But he examined the Scriptures, and could find nothing said about infant baptism.

Samuel. Well, mother ; I have many difficulties in my mind, on that subject. I have been very diligently studying the Bible, to find something to prove that infants should be baptized ; but I can find nothing about it.

Mother. I see you are laboring under a difficulty arising from a fundamental mistake, as to the kind of evidence required to establish the truth. The Baptists say they must have a "*Thus saith the Lord*," for every thing they believe.

Samuel. Well, is not that a good rule ? The prophet says, "To the law and to the testimony ;

if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Mother. True, my son ; but there are many things taught in the Bible, which we cannot find there in so many words. Let us apply the principles of reasoning, adopted by the Baptists, and see where it will lead us. You may read the whole New Testament, from beginning to end, and you will not find any place where permission is given, either directly or indirectly, for females to be admitted to the communion. At the institution of the Lord's Supper, there were none present but the twelve apostles ; and we have no account of its celebration afterwards, where it is expressly said that females partook of the ordinance.

Samuel. I never thought of that, mother.—How then can we show that they ought to be admitted ?

Mother. Just in the way that we prove that infants ought to be baptized. The passover pointed *forward* to the coming of Christ, and represented the great sacrifice which he was to make for our sins. The Lord's Supper now points us *back* to his death, representing the same great day of the week, or none at all ; for there is no

sacrifice. - These two feasts, therefore, though different in form, have, in substance, the same meaning. Females partook of this passover, and we *infer* that they may also partake of the Lord's Supper. Again, females were baptized;* and if they were entitled to one of the sacraments, we can see no reason why they should not be admitted to the other. Besides this, as females were received into the church, on an equal footing with males, we can see no reason why they should not be admitted to the communion table; and, as the primitive church consisted of both males and females, when it is said the disciples came together to break bread, we may safely conclude that the women were among them. Many other arguments might be mentioned; but these are sufficient to show upon what kind of evidence this question must be settled. If we look for a *direct* expression of the will of God, in relation to it, we cannot find it in the Bible; and therefore, if we follow the Baptist rule, we must not admit them to the Lord's Supper. And the same kind of reasoning must lead us to reject the Christian Sabbath, and either keep the seventh express direction, in the New Testament, for

* See Acts 16: 15.

changing the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. Accordingly, in carrying out their mode of reasoning, one sect of Baptists* do keep the seventh day of the week. Many others, among the orthodox Baptists, in order to be consistent, have been under the necessity of adopting the sentiment, that the ten commandments stand on the same footing as the ceremonial law of the Jews; and that none of them are binding upon us, except such as are purely of a *moral* nature, and not dependent upon the direct command of God for their authority.

Samuel. But don't they keep the Sabbath at all?

Mother. Yes; they profess to find authority for keeping it as a day for public worship, from the example of the apostles; but they do not attach the same degree of sanctity to the day, which those do, who keep it on the authority of the fourth commandment. And wherever this sentiment is adopted, its effects may be seen in the loose manner in which the day is kept. I do not say, however, that all the Baptists take this ground. I believe a large proportion of them do not. But I do say that their principles of rea-

* Sabbatarians.

soning, in regard to infant baptism, *require* them to take it, in order to be consistent.

Samuel. Well, mother, I have felt the same difficulty, in regard to the Sabbath. If we are to keep the Sabbath from the authority of the fourth commandment, how can we get rid of keeping the seventh day of the week? How can an immutable command be changed?

Mother. Here you discover a want of discrimination. You must learn to distinguish between the thing required by law, and the mode or manner of observing it. The former cannot be changed without repealing the law; but the latter may be altered, without defeating the object of the precept. The design of the fourth commandment is, to secure the keeping of one day in seven holy to the Lord. Hence the command is to remember the *Sabbath* day, to keep it holy. In the explanatory part of the law, the day to be kept is specified. But you will readily see that a change in the day, will not affect the institution itself.

Samuel. But upon what authority do we change the day? There is no command for it in the New Testament.

Mother. No; but the Apostles were commis-

sioned by the Lord Jesus Christ, to establish the order of worship, under the new dispensation ; and there is abundant evidence that the Apostles and primitive Christians met for public worship, on the first day of the week.* And, as they had always been accustomed to attend public worship on the *Sabbath*, we *infer* that they intended to change the day, so as to make the Christian Sabbath commemorate the resurrection of Christ, instead of the creation of the world. And as this is no alteration of the *substance* of the law, but only in the *mode* of its observance, we consider this change as consistent with the strict observance of the fourth commandment.

Samuel. But is there any evidence in the Bible to show that the early Christians kept the first day of the week to commemorate the resurrection of Christ?

Mother. Yes; they began to keep it *immediately after* Christ arose ; and the Apostle John, in the Revelation, calls it the LORD'S DAY : i. e. the day on which the Lord arose.

Samuel. Well, mother, how would you an-

* John 20 : 19, 26.—In reckoning time, the Jews included both the first and the last day of a given period ; so that eight days would bring them to the same day of the week. Acts 20 : 7.

1 Cor. 16 : 2.

swer the objection, that the fourth commandment, being a positive institution, and not a moral precept, is not binding upon us?

Mother. In the first place, I say that the ten commandments were distinguished from that part of the law of Moses which only related to the old dispensation, by being pronounced, by the voice of God himself, to all the people, and by being written with the finger of God, upon the tables of STONE, to show that they were to be permanent; while the ceremonial law, which was fulfilled and done away in Christ, was delivered to Moses, in the mount, and by him written in a book. The ten commandments, then, I consider not only *morally*, but *positively* binding upon all mankind. But, independent of this, there is unquestionable evidence that the Sabbath was designed for all mankind; for it was instituted in the garden of Eden; and the fourth commandment does not speak of it as a new institution. All the other commandments begin with "*Thou shalt*;" but this one begins with "*Remember*," showing that it was only calling attention to an institution already in existence. These, however, are only a few of the principal arguments in favor of the Christian Sabbath; and I have men-

tioned them, not so much to prove that we ought to observe the first day of the week, as to show that the Christian Sabbath depends on the same kind of proof as Infant Baptism. We can find no *direct command* for the change of the Sabbath; but we have evidence that satisfies our minds.

Samuel. Well, how do you prove that infants should be baptized?

Mother. We think the church of God has been the same in *substance*, under every dispensation. It was first established in the family of Abraham. Both among the patriarchs, and under the law, it consisted of believers and their children. Circumcision was then the rite by which they were admitted into the church; and that was applied to children. We see no reason why the Gospel dispensation should change this feature of the church: why it should not now, as well as then, include the children of believers. And as Baptism is now the rite by which members are received into the church, we see not why it should not be administered to the children of believers.

Samuel. Well, can you prove that the children of believers were baptized by the Apostles? That will satisfy me.

Mother. I think I can find all the evidence that the circumstances of the case would lead us to expect; and that is all that we should ask. When you are reading the *Missionary Herald*, do you find the missionaries giving any account of the baptism of infants?

Samuel. Very seldom, mother; but they often tell of baptizing converts.

Mother. Well, the accounts in the *Missionary Herald* are much more particular than the histories contained in the Acts of the Apostles; which is the only history we have of the Church in the days of the Apostles. We have twelve *Missionary Heralds* in a year; but the book of Acts, which is not much larger than one of them, contains the history of the Church for thirty years. You would not then expect much to be said about the baptism of infants, admitting that it was generally practised.

Samuel. No, I should scarcely expect any thing to be said about it; and if it was mentioned at all, I should suppose it would be done incidentally, in connection with something else.

Mother. Well, just such allusions we have. In the sixteenth chapter of Acts, and fourteenth and fifteenth verses, we are told that the Lord

opened the heart of Lydia to attend to the preaching of Paul; and that she *and her household* were baptized. And in the same chapter, we have an account of the conversion of the jailer, who is said to have been baptized, "he and *all his*, straightway."

Samuel. But in the next verse it is said that he "rejoiced, believing in God, with *all his house*." Does not this prove that they were all baptized?

Mother. If one of our missionaries, who practices infant baptism, were to say in his journal published in the Missionary Herald, that, on a certain occasion, he had baptized a certain lady *and her family*, and on another occasion, that he had baptized a man of rank, with his family, and that he rejoiced, believing in Christ, with all his family, how should we understand him?

Samuel. It would strike my mind, at once, that he had baptized the lady and her children and servants, as we often see it done here, when a person with a family joins the church. And the same I should think of the man.

Mother. Well, would you think that all the man's family were grown up, because the mis-

sionary said he believed and rejoiced, with all his family?

Samuel. No; I should suppose when he said the whole family believed and rejoiced, he only meant all who were capable of believing and rejoicing.

Mother. Now apply the same method of explanation to these passages, and how will you understand them? On the supposition that infant baptism was practised in the primitive churches, no farther reference to the subject was needed, in order to be fully understood by the persons for whom this book was written.—Paul also gives an account of the baptism of another household, in his first epistle to the Corinthians,* and he evidently alludes to the baptism of infants, in the seventh chapter of the same epistle, and the fourteenth verse: “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.”

Elizabeth. Does that mean that the children are born holy, mother?

Mother. The word *holy* sometimes means *morally pure*, and sometimes *set apart* or *conse-*

* 1 Cor. 1: 16.

crated to a sacred use. In this place, it cannot mean morally pure, because that would contradict other parts of the Bible, which represent us all as “by nature children of wrath.” It must therefore mean consecrated or set apart for the Lord; and that is just what is meant to be signified by the parent, when he presents his child for baptism: he consecrates it to the Lord. On the supposition that infant baptism was practised by the church to whom Paul was writing, this passage is easily understood; but on any other supposition, it seems to me to be without any meaning.

Samuel. But is it not possible that all the persons in these three families that were baptized were grown up, and that they all believed?

Mother. That is possible; but there are two things about it that are not probable: 1. That there should have been no children in the only three families particularly mentioned; and 2. That every person in these families, should have been converted. It might have been so; but this is not the most natural way of understanding the account. If we knew, positively, that the primitive Christians *did not* baptize infants, then we should be driven to put this forced construction

upon these passages. But on the supposition that infant baptism was practised, the explanation is natural and easy.

Samuel. Well, on the whole, I am satisfied. I see that it will not do to adopt the principle of requiring direct and positive commands for every thing we do; for then we might throw away half our religion. And when I come to look at the matter fairly, I see that the evidence upon which *female communion, the Christian Sabbath, and infant baptism* rest, is just the kind that the circumstances of the case would naturally lead us to expect. But if baptized children are members of the church, why are they not admitted to the communion?

Mother. Under the old dispensation, some other qualifications, besides being admitted into the church by circumcision, were required, before persons could be admitted to all the privileges of the church. They were required to be *ceremonially clean*, in order to partake of the passover. So, we find, under the new dispensation, that, in order to be admitted to the Lord's Supper, we must have *faith to discern* the Lord's body. (See 1 Cor. 11: 29.) And as soon as baptized children give evidence of such faith, they

are received into full communion, in our churches.

Peter. Well, mother, did Menno get over his doubts about infant baptism, at last?

Mother. No; he finally gave up the doctrine. Not long after, he was made rector of Witmarsum, his native village. There he preached much from the Scriptures; but without being made better himself. He was greatly troubled with the disturbances at Munster, and preached against them. Yet he was so much affected by the example of the multitudes who sacrificed themselves for the interests of the party, that he felt more and more distress and shame on account of his own state of mind. He then prayed to God to help him; and soon, he says, the whole state of his mind became changed. After this, he says he taught Christian piety much more purely and effectually. At length, the discoveries which he had made of the corrupt state of the church of Rome, led him, in the year 1536, utterly to renounce both it and his priestly office. This he called his *departure from Babylon*. He then openly united himself with the Anabaptists. And the next year, he says, there came to him several godly Anabaptists, and entreated him to become

the teacher of this despised and persecuted company; which he consented to do. But he says he was called to the office of teacher, neither by the rebels of Munster, nor by any other turbulent party, but by true professors of Christ and his word, who sought the salvation of all around them, and took up their cross. From this time till his death, which was eighteen years, he discharged the duties of his office, in the midst of many perils and discouragements, poverty and want, with his wife and children. He travelled in Friesland, Gelderland, Holland, Brabant, Westphalia, and in many other places, planting and strengthening Anabaptist churches, or reducing them to order and union. And from him the sect have since been called Mennonites.

Elizabeth. Did Menno teach the same doctrines which the Anabaptists held before?

Mother. His system of doctrine was much milder and more tolerable than that of the fanatical portion of the Anabaptists; but somewhat harsher than that of the more moderate portion of them. He condemned the notion of a new kingdom of Jesus Christ, to be set up in the world by force of arms; and also the mischievous delusion

that miraculous gifts and prophecy were to be restored to the church.

Samuel. These were the two points of doctrine which led to all the tumults and mischief raised by the Anabaptists. I suppose then that his preaching produced a great change in the character of the sect.

Mother. It did ; and from being one of the most fanatical and violent sects that ever existed, they have become a peaceable and inoffensive people. He also condemned the licentious opinions respecting polygamy and divorce, which had been embraced by the leaders of the fanatical party.

Elizabeth. What doctrines did he teach, mother ?

Mother. On the subject of baptism, he taught the doctrine generally received among the Baptists. He also taught that Christ would, before the end of the world, descend and reign with his people a thousand years ; that magistrates or civil rulers are not to be received into the church ; that it is wrong to engage in war, or to take an oath, under any circumstances ; and that human learning is not only useless, but mischievous.

Samuel. Mother, I have some difficulties in my mind about the lawfulness of war and oaths, which I should like to have cleared up. Christ tells us not to resist evil; and if any person strikes us on one cheek, to turn to him the other also. How is that consistent with going to war?

Mother. Here, my son, you show your want of discrimination. Christ was here speaking of individuals; and the general principle taught, is, that we should live quiet and peaceable lives, and not indulge a spirit of resentment of injuries. But he had no reference to the proper authorities of government. In the thirteenth chapter of Romans, we are taught the duty of obedience to the lawful authorities of the government under which we live. The Apostle informs us that governments are *ordained of God*; that rulers are *his ministers*; and that they bear the sword for the punishment of evil doers. Now if God has ordained civil governments, and given them the power of punishing those who are subject to them, it must follow that they have the like authority of punishing those who come from abroad, to disturb their peace, and reduce them to foreign subjection. If we deny to rulers the right of de-

fending the government against foreign invasion, and of resisting such invasion, even at the expense of blood, we must also deny their right to punish those of their own people who break the laws of the country. So you see the carrying out of this principle would overturn all government, law, and order, and introduce general anarchy and confusion; for law, without a penalty, is of no use; and if we deny the right of rulers to take life, in defence of the law, and in execution of its penalties, the punishment of offenders would be out of the question. But at the same time that I believe God has given civil governments the right of maintaining their authority by force, both against foes within and foes without, I freely confess that the *spirit* of war is entirely at variance with the spirit of Christ; and just in proportion as the principles of the Gospel take effect in the world, wars and contentions will cease. And I do not hesitate to say, that most of the wars that have prevailed in the world have been made to gratify the ambition or resentment of wicked rulers; and I believe that nearly all wars might be prevented by a little forbearance on the part of the party injured.

Samuel. But if war is contrary to the spirit of

the Gospel, how could God authorize rulers to engage in it?

Mother. You must recollect, my son, that God has adapted his dispensations to the condition of a fallen race. If man had continued holy, as God made him, defence and punishment would not have been needed, because every one would have been disposed to do right. But human governments are established to meet the necessities of a wicked world; and are therefore armed with the power to maintain their authority, enforce their laws, and punish the lawless and disobedient.

Samuel. Well, mother, Christ says "Swear not at all." How can you get along with that, and maintain the lawfulness of taking oaths, as authorized by law?

Mother. The meaning of that passage of Scripture has been strangely mistaken. If you will read the sermon on the mount, you will see that the design of that part of it, from the seventeenth to the forty-fourth verse, is to condemn the method of explaining away the law, adopted by the Jewish teachers. He begins by telling them that he came not to destroy the law or the prophets, and by declaring, with great solemnity, that

not one jot or tittle should pass from the law, till all should be fulfilled. He then goes on to shew the *spirituality* of the law; that it applied to the thoughts of the heart, as well as to outward actions. He then takes up the perversions of the law, which had been introduced by the Jews; and among others, the subject of swearing. He refers to the law, in which they were forbidden to swear falsely; for that is the meaning of *for-swear*.

Elizabeth. Where is the saying to which he refers, mother?

Mother. In the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus, and twelfth verse, the Lord says, "And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God." In the thirtieth chapter of Numbers, it is written, "If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or *swear an oath* to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth." But if there had been no case in which they were allowed to take an oath, instead of forbidding them to swear falsely, he would have forbidden them to swear at all.

Samuel. Well, does not Christ forbid them to swear at all?

Mother. You break off his sentence before he has finished it; which makes it mean more than he intended. The Jewish Rabbins, or doctors of the law, taught that people might swear by any thing but the name of God, and their oaths would not be binding; and they had, accordingly, introduced a number of oaths, in common conversation, such as swearing by the temple, by the head, by heaven, by the earth, &c. This you will see, by reading from the sixteenth to the twenty-third verse of the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. The same fact also appears from the ancient writings of the Jewish rabbins. It was evidently against this practice of profane swearing, that our Savior was directing his discourse. And if you will read the whole sentence, you will see that the word *all* is qualified by what follows: "Swear not at all: neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool," &c. As if he had said, "I not only tell you not to swear falsely; but I say unto you, swear not at all, by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, or any other such profane oaths as ye are in the

habit of using ; for this is, in effect, to swear by the name of the Lord." He evidently had no reference here to oaths taken in a court of justice ; but to the foolish and wicked practice of swearing in private conversation. But he did not, himself, refuse to take an oath in a court of justice. When he was on his trial before the Sanhedrim, the high priest said to him, "I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God."

Peter. Was that an oath, mother ?

Mother. Yes, any form of words, by which we call God to witness the truth of what we say, is an oath. I suppose this was the form by which persons were put under oath among the Jews. But the Lord Jesus did not, like the Quakers, refuse to answer, under oath.* The Apostle Paul, also, often calls God to witness the truth of what he says ; and that is all that is meant by an oath.† But if you examine the law of Moses, you will find that judicial oaths were required to be taken ;‡ and we have just seen how solemnly Christ declared that he came not to destroy the law.

* Mat. 26 : 63, 64.

† Rom. 1 : 9. 9 : 1. Gal. 1 : 20.

‡ See Exod. 22 : 11. Lev. 5 : 1. Num. 5 : 19. Deut. 29 : 12, 14.

Elizabeth. Was Menno able to convince the Anabaptists that they had been wrong in those doctrines which he rejected?

Mother. I suppose their defeat, and the dangers that threatened them, weakened their confidence in those doctrines which had led them to rebel against the government. But however that may be, Menno soon gained over most of the Anabaptists to his views, and greatly increased their numbers.

Caroline. Are there any Mennonites now, mother?

Mother. Yes; the sect is very numerous in Germany, at the present day; and I believe there are some settlements of them in this country. They have, at different periods, separated into parties, and there are now several distinct sects of Mennonites. But it is not necessary to follow out their history any farther.—We have now had a long conversation. I will tell you but one thing more, and then we will leave the subject for the present. But what I am going to relate, is a painful event.

Elizabeth. What is it, mother?

Mother. It is the death of the good Elector of Saxony. And after so long an acquaintance, I

must confess I shall part with him with a sad heart.

Elizabeth. O yes, I shall too, mother ; for I do love that prince. When did he die ?

Mother. He died on the fifth of May, 1525, about ten days before the defeat of Munzer. Only three days before his death, he wrote a letter to his brother John, to do all he could to settle the disturbances without shedding blood. He told him to choose persons to decide what should be done, who were good men, and favorites of the people ; and to pardon the multitude, and punish only the leaders of the rebellion. He was strongly impressed with the belief that these disturbances were the judgments of heaven, on account of the hindrances which had been thrown in the way of the preaching of the Gospel ; and he lamented the oppression of the people, in various ways. A short time before his death, he called his servants around him, and addressed them in the following manner : “ I entreat you, my dearest children, in the name of God, and for his sake, to forgive me, if I have offended any of you in word or deed ; and to make, in my name, the same request for me to others. We princes are apt to treat our poor distressed subjects in a vex-

atious and unjustifiable manner." His devout and affectionate expressions drew tears from Spalatinus, and all present. Although, at the beginning of the Reformation, he was a zealous Roman Catholic, he appears, before his death, to have been thoroughly weaned from Popery. In his last will, he says, "I beseech Almighty God, through the sacred and unexampled merits of his Son, to pardon all my sins and transgressions; neither do I doubt but that, by the precious death of my dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I shall obtain forgiveness; and therefore, into his all-powerful hands, and to his eternal, immeasurable, unsearchable, kindness and compassion, I commit my soul, to be preserved for the enjoyment of a happy immortality. I freely forgive all who have done me any wrong; and I beseech them, in the name of God, and for his sake, to pardon, from the heart, and with a true Christian charity, me, in whatever I may have offended them, agreeably to what we every day pray for, the mutual forgiveness of trespasses from God, the Father of Compassion." By the advice of Luther and Melancthon, he was buried without pomp, and without any superstitious ceremonies. Melancthon made an oration in Latin, and Lu-

ther preached a sermon, at his funeral. Before his death, he invited Luther to meet him, for the purpose of consulting how he might more openly support the reformed religion in Saxony. But this meeting was prevented, by the absence of the Reformer, who was preaching to the rebellious peasants in Thuringia.

QUESTIONS.

Can you give an account of the proceedings of Munzer? What became of him at last? Who stirred up sedition again? Can you give an account of their proceedings at Munster, and of the final overthrow of the "King of Sion?" What happened at the same time, at Amsterdam? How came Menno to join the Anabaptists? What service did he do for the sect? Can you give an account of the death of Frederic?







